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THE EVOLUTION OF HEBERTO PADILLA'S POETRY

By

Berthica Rodriguez-McCleary

B.A., University of Montana, 1978

M.A., University of Montana, 1986

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

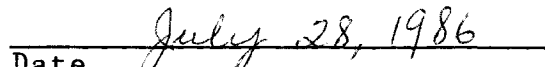
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Rodriguez-McCleary, Berthica M.A., August 1986

Spanish

The Evolution of Heberto Padilla's Poetry (119 pp.)

Director: Kenneth C. Brett *KCB*

Heberto Padilla's poetic work--influenced by the Cuban revolution--reflects the maturing process of the poet as he writes before, during, and after Fidel Castro's 1959 takeover. The three sequential poetic collections, El justo tiempo humano, Fuera del juego, and El hombre junto al mar trace Heberto Padilla's poetic development as he contemplates the personal and political events of his time. Padilla's lyrical themes unfold progressively as his focus and historical perspective change and mature.

In El justo tiempo humano, Padilla recalls the private moments of his past. Melancholy and nostalgia prevail throughout the work as the poet describes his lonely childhood and unfulfilled searching for love. At last, Padilla finds hope in the promises offered by the nascent Cuban revolution. This philosophical shift, reflected in the final poems of the book, signals a change of focus from internal to external concerns.

Padilla's subsequent disillusionment with the new political order brought him to write Fuera del juego. These powerful poems--the contents of which ultimately placed him in prison--reflect the inhumanity and lack of hope which Padilla experiences following the Castro insurgency. The book's bitterness is doubly ironic in that it represents a complete reversal of the faith that the poet had originally placed in the new revolution.

After becoming persona non grata and being placed under restrictive house arrest, Padilla began to write the poems found in El hombre junto al mar. The collection was written over a period of more than ten years and finally published in 1981, after the poet was in exile. In this work, Padilla creates a balance between his personal experiences and the events occurring in the world around him. The themes of the book no longer portray the angry vision of earlier poems but instead focus on man's ability to find solace in fulfilling love and to overcome adversity with hope. In so doing, the poet recognizes the harmony present in his world and accepts that his own humanity and history, both positive and negative, are the necessary components for his poetic creation.

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CHAPTER I

HEBERTO PADILLA'S POETRY HISTORICAL-POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

In order to fully understand Cuban poet Heberto Padilla's work, it must be seen in the light of the political events which have taken place in Cuba since 1959, when Fulgencio Batista's dictatorship was overthrown by Fidel Castro. When studied chronologically, Padilla's poetry clearly changes in both tone and content as the poet experiences, responds to, and is affected by the impact of the developing Cuban revolution.

After the Castro takeover, writers and artists continued their creative efforts with renewed commitment and vigor. During the fifties, many of these young intellectuals had lacked much official acknowledgment or social status. Thus, in the early sixties, they gave themselves over to a revolution which they believed would give them a place in the emerging society. For those who had been successful in the past, the revolution provided a new source of focus: "Aún aquellos que, antes de la revolución, se habían distinguido por la finura de su lirismo personal, ahora aprendieron a cantar los temas de la colectividad sintiéndose parte del radicalismo (sic) experimento político."¹

The common theme of their work embraced the Cuba which was evolving, and its tone was that of patriotism, optimism, and praise for the new political order. This sentiment is clearly expressed in Fayad Jamís's poem, "Por esta libertad":

Por esta libertad

Por esta libertad de canción bajo la lluvia
habrá que darlo todo.

Por esta libertad de estar estrechamente atados
a la firme y dulce entraña del pueblo
habrá que darlo todo.

Por esta libertad de girasol abierto en el alba
de las fábricas
encendidas y escuelas iluminadas
y de tierra que cruje y niño que despierta
habrá que darlo todo.
No hay más camino que la libertad.
No hay otra patria que la libertad.
No habrá más poema sin la violenta música de la
libertad.

Por esta libertad que es el terror
de los que siempre la violaron
en nombre de fastuosas miserias.
Por esta libertad que es la noche de los opresores
y el alba definitiva de todo el pueblo ya invencible.
Por esta libertad que alumbra las pupilas hundidas,
los pies descalzos,
los techos agujereados
y los ojos de los niños que deambulan en el polvo.

Por esta libertad que es el imperio de la juventud.
Por esta libertad
bella como la vida,
habrá que darlo todo
si fuere necesario
hasta la sombra
y nunca será suficiente.²

Indeed, it was a time of "escuelas iluminadas" as Cuba experienced what appeared to be a true intellectual renaissance. The official government newspaper, Revolución, began printing a literary supplement

entitled Lunes de Revolución. In it were published contemporary poetry, critiques of films, reviews of cultural events, speeches by Ernesto "Ché" Guevara and Fidel Castro, as well as works by Camús, Pasternak, Joyce, and others. The government also began a program of conversations with the intellectuals to discuss "the role of culture within the new society."³ In addition, the amount of literature published by the state increased dramatically, giving authors a new incentive to produce original works.

Like other poets, Heberto Padilla saw the early stages of the revolution as the beginning of a new literary freedom. Even though Padilla is a contemporary poet whose writing is specifically influenced by the political events occurring in Cuba at the time, the process of his maturation is similar to that experienced and demonstrated by other well-known poets. In 1962, Padilla published El justo tiempo humano,⁴ a collection of poetry he had written over the previous several years. In his poem, "Como un animal," he attributes animal characteristics to the pain and suffering he saw in his "pueblo." By the end of the poem, however, he claims a victory--his own as well as Cuba's--over the cat-like misery:

Como un animal

Como un animal
viniste a lamer a lo largo de mi vida
para verme escribir
o desertar cada mañana.

Por las noches viniste a traicionarme,
a escupir sobre mi cara,
a morderme.
Miseria, mi animal,
ya hemos hecho justicia.

Entre los cubos de basura
de mi pueblo, sin nada que comer
en el fondo; entre las gatas

que me miraban con tus ojos
y el dolor de una vida que escocía
para perderme,
tú te instalabas cada noche.

Ahora puedo mentarte
con piedad, ahora mi mano
se hunde en la Revolución
y escribe sin rencores;
ahora golpeo
la mesa con un puño
alegre y seguro.
¡Ya hemos hecho justicia!⁵

The period of artistic freedom which Padilla and other intellectuals felt, however, was relatively short-lived. Very soon, the battle began between those who wanted to open Cuban culture to contemporary trends, and government ideologues who believed that every aspect of the society should fall under strict control. The first group advanced concepts of liberty and democratic pluralism, while the second sought to force literature into the service of the revolution.⁶

Between 1961 and 1967, the freedom originally felt by intellectuals at the beginning of the revolution was slowly but unquestionably curtailed. As the revolution gained strength, the individual voice of the poet weakened, and personal expression became limited within strict, government-enforced parameters. These restrictions had been clearly outlined by Fidel Castro as early as June, 1961, and were echoed by other leaders and critics in the following years:

Contra la Revolución nada, porque la Revolución tiene también sus derechos y el primer derecho de la Revolución es existir y frente al derecho de la Revolución de ser y de existir, nada. Por cuanto la Revolución significa los intereses de la Nación entera, nadie puede

alegar con razón un derecho contra ella.
Creo que ésto es bien claro. ¿Cuáles son los derechos de los escritores y de los artistas revolucionarios? Dentro de la Revolución: todo; contra la Revolución ningún derecho.

Y ésto no sería ninguna ley de excepción para los artistas y para los escritores. . . . Los contrarevolucionarios, es decir los enemigos de la Revolución, no tienen ningún derecho contra la Revolución, porque la Revolución tiene un derecho: el derecho de existir, el derecho de desarrollarse y el derecho a vencer, ¿quién pudiera poner en duda ese derecho de un pueblo que ha dicho: "PATRIA O MUERTE," es decir, La Revolución o la muerte?

With the progression of time, the revolution thus began to obtain an entity of its own; one which had to be protected and exalted at all cost. The revolution had rights which could not be threatened by any artistic display which might be interpreted as anti-revolutionary. In this way, and bit by bit, Cuba--la Patria--and La Revolución became synonymous. Simultaneously, the label of "anti-revolutionary" was expanded to include those who, while not actively against the revolution, were also not actively for it. In other words, if a poet or artist was not blatantly pro-revolutionary--though he might be totally apolitical--he was classified as anti-revolutionary. Some years later the First National Congress of Education and Culture in Cuba would be explicit in its philosophy when it stated:

La cultura, como la educación, no es ni puede ser apolítica ni imparcial, en tanto que es un fenómeno social e histórico condicionado por las necesidades de las clases sociales y sus luchas e intereses a lo largo de la historia. El apoliticismo no es más que un punto de vista vergonzante y reaccionario en la concepción y expresión culturales.⁸

As a result of this wide-spread propaganda, those who were categorized as "apolitical" had many of their promised rights taken away; they were not allowed to travel out of the country, have art exhibitions, or publish.

This erosion of the intellectuals' freedom was demonstrated by the disbandment of the literary circle known as "El Puente." Members of this group had been the only remaining writers to openly condemn compromised literature. The government found them to be "dissolute and negative," and prohibited the continuation of their organized meeting. Shortly after this action, none other than the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC) further exemplified the breakdown in freedom of poetic expression. The role of UNEAC had become one of protecting the rights of the state to control the arts rather than one of ensuring the interests of writers and artists.⁹ The union decided to condemn Chilean poet Pablo Neruda for having visited the United States, and other writers were obliged to agree in order to protect themselves. In the eyes of the government, the only worthy writers--few as they were--were those who sang the praises of the revolution, a belief further expressed by Commander-in-Chief Castro:

La existencia de la Revolución . . . es la tarea y la meta que el pueblo tiene que asignarse y tiene que realizar; es fundamentalmente lo que yo tengo que plantear. No para hablar de lo que ocurrió, ni del heroísmo de la gente, ni del drama humano--sobre el cual pueden hablar los escritores, si nosotros tuviéramos escritores, yo creo que tenemos muy pocos; y vamos a ver si tenemos periodistas también, y escriben un poco . . . ¹⁰

Implied in Castro's words was the sentiment that Cuba did not, in fact, have worthwhile writers or journalists. Indeed, when government restrictions and demands increased, many writers compromised themselves to revolutionary slogans and praises, while others secluded themselves, unable to publish the true expressions of their beliefs. A few, however, spoke out against the censorship and oppression of the times

and were willing to suffer the consequences of their actions. They were humiliated by literary critics, imprisoned, or exiled.

In 1968, Heberto Padilla began to print poems from his collection, Fuera del juego.¹¹ Now obviously disillusioned with the same revolution he had praised a few years before, Padilla set himself outside of the political games he saw around him and sang out against them. In "Los poetas cubanos ya no sueñan," Padilla describes the inability of Cuban poets to have poetic vision when they are forced to "see" only what the authorities allow (and compel) them to see:

Los poetas cubanos ya no sueñan

Los poetas cubanos ya no sueñan
(ni siquiera por la noche).

Van a cerrar la puerta para escribir a solas
cuando cruje, de pronto, la madera;
el viento los empuja al garete;
unas manos los cojen por los hombros,
los voltean,
los ponen frente a otras caras

(hundidas en pantanos, ardiendo en el napalm)
y el mundo encima de sus bocas fluye
y está obligado el ojo a ver, a ver, a ver.¹²

Padilla's poems created a fury of debate and were venomously attacked in Verde Olivo, the widely-read, government-backed magazine. In spite of the controversy, that same year UNEAC unanimously distinguished the work with the first place award (el Premio Julián de Casal) in its annual poetry contest, and agreed to publish the complete collection, Fuera del juego.

On October 28, 1968, the executive board of the UNEAC competition reunited to re-examine the awards granted to Padilla for his poems, and

to Antón Arrufat for his theatrical piece, "Los siete contra Tebas." On November 15, the committee presented a document which outlined the conclusions of its October meeting. The detailed report, which later was published as a critical prologue to Fuera del juego, clearly accused Padilla's work of being self-serving and anti-revolutionary:

Ahora bien: ¿a quién o a quiénes sirven estos libros? ¿Sirven a nuestra revolución, calumniada en esa forma, herida a traición por tales medios?

Evidentemente, no. Nuestra convicción revolucionaria nos permite señalar que esa poesía y ese teatro [de Arrufat] sirven a nuestros enemigos, y sus autores son los artistas que ellos necesitan para alimentar su caballo de Troya a la hora en que el imperialismo se decida a poner en práctica su política de agresión bélica frontal contra Cuba.¹³

In an apparent reversal of the original jurors' praise for the first place winners, UNEAC's executive committee concluded:

En resumen: la dirección de la Unión de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba rechaza el contenido ideológico del libro de poemas y de la obra teatral premiados. Es posible que tal medida pueda señalarse por nuestros enemigos . . . como un signo de endurecimiento. Por el contrario, entendemos que ella será altamente saludable para la Revolución, porque significa su profundización y su fortalecimiento al plantear abiertamente la lucha ideológica.¹⁴

In spite of the debate surrounding Fuera del juego, the book was finally published in 1969. However, as a result of the controversy and in order to underline what was expected of cultural institutions and individuals, a second literary contest was organized in which works would be judged solely on the basis of political merit, not artistic value. The 1969 and 1970 winners were two collections of short stories which "simplistically [contrasted] Cuba's corrupt past with its presumably heroic and exemplary present."¹⁵

Soon after the publication of Fuera de juego, Padilla began to work at the University of Havana. In 1971, he gave a poetry reading entitled, "Provocaciones."¹⁶ As openly against the brutality of the revolution as his previous work, "Provocaciones" reiterated the poet's disillusionment. The content of his presentation echoed the tone and message of Fuera del juego:

A Galileo

Hemos llenado nuestros libros
de cárceles horrendas donde han sufrido héroes;
cárceles lindísimas después en los poemas,
sobre todo si el héroe sobrevive
o muere brutalmente golpeado
o lo fusilan contra un muro
y lo meten de pronto en la Elegía.
Los grandes poetas hablaron siempre
las jergas de la cárcel.
Los mejores poemas siempre han nacido
bajo la antorcha de los carceleros.
No hay verdadera historia
que no tenga como fondo una cárcel.¹⁷

At approximately the same time that Padilla spoke at the university, the First Congress on Education and Culture was beginning a campaign to restrict and even terrorize the intellectual community. On March 20, 1971, its efforts culminated with the arrest of Padilla and his wife, Belkis Cuza Malé, also a writer. Both were accused of participating in "actividades subversivas" against Cuba's revolutionary government.¹⁸

The writers' detention resulted in wide-spread, international protests against the government's actions and on behalf of Padilla and his wife. On April 2, Mexico's PEN Club sent a letter to Fidel Castro in support of the poets. The letter was signed by such well-known

intellectuals as José Alvaro, José Luis Cuevas, Isabel Fraire, Carlos Fuentes, Eduardo Lizalde, Octavio Paz, and Juan Rulfo among others:

Los suscritos, miembros del PEN Club de México y simpatizantes de la lucha del pueblo cubano por su independencia, desaprobamos la aprehension del poeta Heberto Padilla. . . . Nuestro criterio común afirma el derecho a la crítica intelectual lo mismo en Cuba que en cualquier otro país. La libertad de Heberto Padilla nos parece esencial para no terminar, mediante un acto represivo y antidemocrático, con el gran desarrollo del arte y la literatura cubanas.¹⁹

In addition, on April 9, Fidel Castro received a letter from European and Latin American intellectuals which expressed their objections regarding the poet's detention:

Los abajo firmantes, solidarios con los principios y objetivos de la Revolución Cubana, le dirigimos la presente para expresar nuestra inquietud debida al encarcelamiento del poeta y escritor Heberto Padilla y pedirle reexamine la situación que este arresto ha creado.²⁰

Among those who signed the letter were Simone de Beauvoir, Julio Cortazar, Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel García Márquez, Juan and Luis Goytisolo, Jean-Paul Sartre, Octavio Paz, Mario Vargas Llosa and many others.

Approximately one month after being incarcerated, on April 27, Padilla was set free but only after agreeing or being forced to give a highly publicized discourse to the UNEAC members and State Security Department. In his talk, Padilla gave a summary of all of his "sins," "confessed" to being self-serving and dishonest, and accused other writers of being equally mistaken:

Yo, bajo el disfraz del escritor rebelde, lo único que hacía era ocultar mi desafecto a la Revolución. . . . Y no había ningún derecho a que ésta fuese nuestra posicion [la de el y otros escritores]; no había ningún derecho a esta dicotomía, a que por un lado pensásemos de una forma en nuestra vida privada, a que fuésemos

unos desafectos como era yo, verdaderamente venenoso y agresivo y acre contra la Revolución, y por el otro, en lo internacional, queriendo proyectar la imagen de un escritor inconforme y de un escritor inquieto . . .

. . . Yo me siento avergonzado . . .²¹

On May 21, a second letter by the European and Latin American intellectuals was sent to Castro. This time, its writers expressed strong disapproval and disgust at what they saw as a forced confession by Padilla. The list of well-known names which followed this letter was again an impressive collection of writers, poets, and critics:

Creemos un deber comunicarle nuestra vergüenza y nuestra cólera. El lastimoso texto de la confesión que ha firmado Heberto Padilla solo puede haberse obtenido por medio de métodos que son la negación de la legalidad y la justicia revolucionarias. El contenido y la forma de dicha confesión, con sus acusaciones absurdas y afirmaciones delirantes, así como el acto celebrado en la UNEAC, en el cual el propio Padilla y los compañeros, Belkis Cuza, Días Martínez, Cesar López y Pablo Armando Fernández se sometieron a una penosa mascarada de autocritica, recuerda los momentos más sórdidos de la época stalinista, sus juicios prefabricados y sus cacerías de brujas.²²

After his time in prison, Padilla was forbidden to publish any personal writing. He was relieved from his duties at the University of Havana and deprived of his membership to the Writers' Union, so in order to make a living, he became a technical translator. He requested permission to leave the country on numerous occasions, but was denied exit. As a result, he remained in an unofficial in-house detention for almost a decade.

After the intervention of Edward Kennedy, Padilla was finally allowed to leave Cuba on March 16, 1980. Upon arriving in New York, he was welcomed by The Institute for Humanities and by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. In 1981 Padilla published his last book of poems to date, El hombre junto al mar²³

In El hombre junto al mar, Padilla moves away from the political poetry of Fuera del juego and presents a work of mature literary value. The angry voice of the earlier collection now gives way to a more universal and quiet one. Thirteen years have passed, and the poet has been altered by time and history; he is no longer so close to the "fire." Thus, the events or attitudes which prevailed in Fuera del juego are not longer the central theme of El hombre junto al mar. They still, nonetheless, color the tone and content of the new work, and add a depth to his poetry:

Lo mejor es cantar desde ahora

Lo mejor es que empiece a cantar
desde ahora
la alegría de los sueños cumplidos
y me olvide del mundo de mis antepasados.
Ellos a la ceniza. Yo a la vida.
Siempre anduve entre nieblas como un idiota.
No pudo ser de otra manera.
No es posible que en un pecho de hombre
quepa tanta maldad.
Mañana limpiaré la trastienda
y saldré a la calle
y al doblar una esquina
cualquiera podrá verme lanzar los objetos
que elaboré en las noches
con mis uñas de gato.
Mi orgullo sera ver a las viejas
orinarse de risa
cuando vean tremolar mi chaleco de feria;
mi alegría que los niños destrocen
mi careta y mi barba.
Porque nadie dedicó más vehemencia
-en el peor instante-
a ensayar este paso de atleta,
este nuevo redoble de tambor.
Los himnos y los trenos
pertenecen al tiempo de los cadáveres esbeltos
con su hilillo de sangre entre los labios
y el desgarrón de lanza, dignos de la elegía.
Entonces el poeta era la plañidera
que se esforzaba por conmovier las multitudes.

Pero hoy heredamos este muñón sin dueño,
este ojo abierto en la escudilla.
Y hay que exaltar la vida, sin embargo,
apartar la basura,
y cantar la alegría de los sueños cumplidos,
pero con buena música de fondo;
de violín, si es posible, que es el instrumento
adecuado: agudo, recto como un arma.²⁴

In El hombre junto al mar, Heberto Padilla offers a more optimistic and lyrical vision of his world. The experiences of the past now give texture to the present, while love and hope take the place of weapons and beatings in the night. the past and the present interweave together to create a portrait of man, his humanity, and his unwillingness to give up. The book is itself a tribute to Padilla's-- and man's--determination to make a new start and continue with the business of life.

In Heberto Padilla's El justo tiempo humano, Fuera del juego, and El hombre junto al mar, the reader is led through three separate and distinct stages of the poet's philosophical and poetic development. The Cuban political scene and its effects are felt as the poetry moves through the development of the revolution and reflects the poet's personal attitude. As the work unfolds, Padilla acquires the distance and depth necessary to create for a universal audience.

CHAPTER II

EL JUSTO TIEMPO HUMANO:

PADILLA THE SEEKER AND REVOLUTIONARY

In El justo tiempo humano,²⁵ Heberto Padilla presents the desperation and agony of his own--and humanity's--past. These feelings are then joyfully transformed into the new hope and faith that the Cuban Revolution offers. The first section of the book is filled with the poetry of a man who recalls his childhood and adolescence as painful and solitary. By returning metaphorically and lyrically to a time now distant, the poet unfolds his hopelessness while at the same time treating his theme with a tender and bitter-sweet nostalgia. In the final part of the book, he embraces the revolution which holds open the door to a future where a better life and renewed justice shine brightly.

According to critic Jose Mario:

Todas las preocupaciones que van a alimentar la obra de Padilla relucen en su primer libro [El justo tiempo humano] sin que adquirieran esa condición de tomar partido, de convertirse en crítica social. La espontaneidad alcanza intensos grados de emoción, donde el poeta siente más que razona. Se hace solidario y no dialéctico
... 26

Indeed, as a whole, the work focuses on that which is human and personal rather than that which is political. Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío shows a similar stage of poetic development in his early work. Critic Orlando Gómez-Gil states that after Darío's period of "poesía preciosista y [del] exterior," (Azul and Prosas Profanas) in Cantos de vida y esperanza, the modernist poet:

. . . Ahora canta los efectos del paso del tiempo, la angustia de la juventud ida, el alma atormentada por la lucha entre la carne y el espíritu, el misterio del origen y destino final del hombre, el dolor de vivir, las dudas del espíritu, el remordimiento . . . ²⁷

These same concerns appear in Padilla from the very first poem, "Dones." He paints his life as a continuum of frustrations and deprivation. Neither as a child nor as an adult does the poet experience long-lasting satisfaction. In the four sections of the poem, he is denied the opportunities given to other children; he is left empty after his travels abroad and in America; he is defeated in his attempts at a deep or meaningful relationship with a woman.

Dones

I

No te fue dado el tiempo del amor
ni el tiempo de la calma. No pudiste leer
el claro libro de que te hablaron tus abuelos.
Un viento de furia te meció desde niño,
un aire de primavera destrozada.
¿Qué viste cuando tus ojos buscaron el pabellón
despejado? ¿Quiénes te recibieron
cuando esperabas la alegría?
¿Qué mano tempestuosa te asió cuando extendiste
el cuerpo hacia la vida?

No te fue dado el tiempo de la gracia.
No se abrieron para ti blancos papeles por llenar.
No te acogieron; fuiste un niño confuso.
Golpeaste y protestaste en vano.

Saliste en vano a la calle.
Te pusieron un cuello negro y una gorra de luto,
y un juego torpe, indescifrable.

No te fue dado el tiempo abierto
como un arco hacia la edad de la esperanza.
Donde naciste te sacudieron e hicieron mofa
de tus ojos miopes; y no pudiste ser
testigo en el umbral o el huesped,
o simplemente el loco. 28
.

In the first stanza of the poem, the poet describes his difficulties from birth. A turbulent wind surrounds him from the start, and even spring, traditionally a time for hope and new life, is a season "destrozada." Like T. S. Eliot's April in "The Burial of the Dead," Padilla's "primavera" brings no sign of spiritual growth. It raises the hope that the barren land will flower, but it is merely a cruel hoax; only dull, dry tubers are forthcoming:

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
.
What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish?
. 29

Such a spring parallels and underlines the unhappy spring of Padilla's own life: his early years. The three questions with which he ends the verse accentuate his search for explanations. They allude to the disappointment he feels in either the absence of answers or in the answers themselves.

As Padilla's poem continues, it becomes evident that all which should have been positive is recalled as negative. He was "un niño confuso," and his actions both at home ("golpes" and "protestas") as

well as outside in the streets appear to have been in vain. Ironically, even childhood games, which might have brought some laughter to his life, were "torpe, indescifrable." The tendency to be critical--so prevalent in this stage of Padilla's poetic development--is often found in the early works of many poets including Darío and Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. Darío's "Yo soy aquel . . ." echoes the same "dolor":

Yo supe de dolor desde mi infancia,
mi juventud . . . fue juventud la mía?
Sus rosas aun me dejan su fragancia . . .
--una fragancia de melancolía . . .³⁰

In the third stanza of "Dones," Padilla uses a beautifully lyrical simile which highlights his longing for that which was denied to him:

No te fue dado el tiempo abierto
como un arco hacia la edad de la esperanza.³¹

The "arco"--commonly accepted as a Nerudian symbol--here may be interpreted in two ways. It may refer to the open arc of a rainbow stretched over the horizon, or it may be the open bow ready to shoot an arrow to infinity. The poet has not experienced such vastness of time. Instead, all has been so dark, closed, and limiting that he seems unable to find his role, not even as the town's "loco":

En tu patria, sobre su rosa,
con tanto sol y aire caliente, silbaste
largamente hasta herir o soñar; silbaste
contra la lejanía, contra el azar,
contra la fastidiosa esperanza,
contra la noche deslavazada, tonto!

Y sin embargo, tenías cosas que decir:
sueños, anhelos, viajes, resoluciones
angustiosas;
una voz que no torcieron
tu demasiado amor ni ciertas cóleras.³²
.....

The fourth stanza ends with the poet calling himself, "tonto." Here, again, the poet is very critical of himself. When he looks back and recalls that he "whistled" against all that might have brought him peace, he calls himself "tonto." He mocked and shunned joy, faith, and hope while making himself totally miserable. As in Darío's "Yo soy aquel . . . ," there is a growing awareness of the immature actions of the past and a recognition of change. The following stanza for the first time shows a glimmer of fortitude. The poet "tenía cosas que decir . . . [y] una voz que no torcieron . . ." His song continued, however foolishly, because there was a voice within him which could not be contained. The theme of the poet speaking out against all odds and at any cost is one which will recur throughout all of Padilla's work.

It is fitting, therefore, that the poem continues with the allusion to the Phoenix. The Phoenix represents both Padilla's inability in the past to affect a spiritual change in his life, as well as the continual calling he felt to speak out and not to give up (" . . . y sin embargo, tenías cosas que decir . . . "). Indeed, even though he was not given "el tiempo de aquel pájaro / que destruye su forma y reaparece, . . ." with each new poem, is not the poet himself a phoenix?

No te fue dado el tiempo de aquel pájaro
que destruye su forma y reaparece,
sino la boca con usura, la mano leguleya,
la transacción penosa entre los presidiarios,
las cenizas derramadas sobre los crematorios
aún alentando, aun alentando.

No te fue dado el tiempo del halcón,
(el arco, la piedra lisa y útil): tiempo
de los oficios, tiempo versado en fuegos

sobre la huella de los hombres,
sino el año harapiento, libidinoso
en que se queman tus labios con amor.³³
.

The motif of the Phoenix is carefully supported throughout the stanzas as the poet brings forth images of the "cenizas," "crematorios," "fuegos," and lips "que se queman" which surround him. In addition, the "arco" denied to him is mentioned once again, now in conjunction with another primitive image of purity, "la piedra lisa y útil." Both images underline the seeming inability to achieve a high or noble aspiration. There is no phoenix to rise from the ashes; here are only ashes. There is no high-flying falcon, outstretched bow, or primitive innocence; there is only lechery and poverty of spirit. He was not given "el tiempo versado en fuegos." Life, as he describes it, lacks the passion and burning vitality that he desires.

Even though Pablo Neruda's "Cuerpo de mujer" in 20 Poemas de amor y una Canción desesperada is much more emotionally romantic than Padilla's poem, similarities surface; both address the themes of solitude and pain. Gómez-Gil states that Neruda's book "brota lleno de angustia y dolor, con exaltación romántica hacia la expresión de la soledad y el abandono, . . ." Neruda's "Cuerpo de mujer" utilizes some of the same symbols ("pájaros . . . arcos . . . piedra") and motifs evident throughout Padilla's "Dones":

Cuerpo de mujer

Cuerpo de mujer, blancas colinas, muslos blancos
te pareces al mundo en tu actitud de entrega.
Mi cuerpo de labriego salvaje te socava
y hace saltar el hijo del fondo de la tierra.
Fui solo como un tunel. De mi huían los pájaros,

y en mi la noche entraba su invasión poderosa.
Para sobrevivirme te forjé como un arma,
como una flecha en mi arco, como una piedra en
mi honda.

Pero cae la hora de la venganza, y te amo.

Cuerpo de piel, de musgo, de leche ávida y firme.
¡Ah los vasos del pecho! ¡Ah los ojos de ausencia!
¡Ah las rosas del pubis! ¡Ah tu voz lenta y triste!

Cuerpo de mujer mía, persistiré en tu gracia.
Mi sed, mi ansia sin límite, mi camino indeciso!
Oscuros cauces donde la sed eterna sigue,
y la fatiga sigue, y el dolor infinito.³⁴

In section II of the poem, Padilla evokes allusions to his travels away from Cuba. Like those of his childhood, these memories hold no joy or fulfillment. The entire section is made up of four questions, again left unanswered except by the imagination of the reader. When he sought a sign from the heavens, he found only emptiness. When he sought fulfillment with a lover, he felt only solitude. At midnight, when he slept, fear awakened him to find only a stranger:

II

A medianoche, callado y pálido,
¿qué signo buscabas en el cielo?

Bajo el puente de Londres, en el cinematógrafo
donde exhibían documentos de la guerra de China,
¿qué fuerza te llevaba al borde del canal,
conversando sobre las rebeliones?
¿Qué sentías en el apartamento de Hyde Park,
lanzado sobre unos labios de tu raza?

¿Que grito te despertaba a medianoche
frente a sus ojos que no te podían mirar,
que no te podían medir,
ni adivinar, ni penetrar, inexpresivos
y totales?³⁵

Throughout the three stanzas, the poet uses no colors and few descriptive adjectives to bring life to the images. The play between dark ("medianoche") and light ("pálido") in the first line, together with the lack of other tonalities in the section create a stark, muted picture. The general impression is not unlike a series of fading black and white photographs--two-dimensional, ephemeral, and silent--perhaps like the old Chinese war documents exhibited in London.

In this section of the poem, the poet is virtually alone. Even though there are references to other characters in the verses, none is seen wholly or as a complete individual; they are depersonalized. The poet, at the edge of a canal, is seen "conversing about rebellions." This phrase serves to reintroduce the theme of the poet's past rebelliousness. The content of these conversations weave again the idea of his "silbato" against the positive forces which may have been around him but he chose to reject. With whom he speaks "al borde del canal" is totally irrelevant. There is no human interaction, no lively discussion or exchange. It is almost as though the poet might have been talking to himself.

Similarly, in the apartment at Hyde Park, "unos labios" accompany the poet. As in Neruda's "Cuerpo de mujer," it is important to note the intentional absence of another being; only parts of a second person are introduced. Just as Neruda uses a woman as a defense against solitude, Padilla turns to physical--though unfulfilling--love as a defense "contra el azar / contra la fastidiosa esperanza, / contra la noche." Faced with what appears to be no more than a purely physical or sexual

interaction, the reader is left feeling that no fulfilling relationship truly exists.

Finally, at the end of Padilla's second section, someone who might have understood, who might have reached into the poet's dark soul is reduced to a pair of inexpressive eyes. Padilla again subtly but critically recalls his early stance as a solitary, romantic poet. The "grito . . . a medianoche" was his own frightening realization that he existed for no one, not even for the woman in his arms. As in the center stanza, there is no clue of the presence of a compassionate and sensitive human being. Instead, a pair of eyes stares in the night unable to see, evaluate, comprehend, or penetrate the poet's existential solitude.

The solitary existence evident in the second section of the poem is reinforced in the first three stanzas of its third:

III

América,
tú me tragabas a fondo y yo te amaba,
tú me arrastrabas con mi niña y con Berta
entre las privaciones, y te amaba;
tú me ponías nombres y te amaba.
No me sentías viajar, en los vagones del
 invierno,
entre las ráfagas de luz
de los barrios del Este, y yo te amaba.

¿Me conocías? ¿Me veías pasar,
desconcertado, con ensueños? ¿Me veías
vivir buscando el canto que te ciñera?
¿Me veías cruzar hacia los barrios del Oeste,
con Pablo y con Maruja, hacia la plaza
de Peter Minuit?

Deambulábamos entre tus calles.
Eso era la esperanza.
Poco nos importaba quien nos viera.

Andabamos con un dialecto suficiente para
 nuestros fines, como quería Henry James.
 Nadie nos vió negarte o escupirte,
³⁶

Here the poet is seen lost in America, swallowed up and pulled into its "barrios." Yet, despite the love he professes for that new country, he receives nothing lasting in return. Whether with "Berta" or when joined by "Pablo" and "Maruja," he and his companions are distinctly separated and set apart from their surroundings. They walk alone in the midst of the crowds: "Poco nos importaba quien nos viera. . . . / Nadie nos vió negarte o escupirte. . . ." Again, he is described as roaming unseen and unknown in a private world that was enough ("suficiente") but only for a brief moment. His physical wandering parallels his internal longing for the intangible fulfillment which has eluded him throughout the entire poem:

¿Me veías vivir buscando el canto que te ciñera?³⁷

Beginning with the fourth stanza, the poet reminisces about an early love. He addresses another with the familiar "tú," and, for the first time, there is a flow and fullness of emotion, "¡Cómo de pronto fuiste todo amor!" In this section, the memory and voice of the poet seem positive: "Apareciste cuando mis horas necesitaban / que llegaras . . . / tan de repente acogida por mi alma . . ." However, in spite of the "signo feliz" present at the moment, there is a foreboding presence throughout the verses that underlines the irrevocable solitude of the poet. Lasting love and satisfaction were not part of his "dones":

Tampoco tú me viste, niña mía.
 Apareciste cuando mis horas necesitaban

que llegaras.
 Apareciste pálida, serena,
 tan de repente acogida por mi alma,
 tan simplemente mía.
 Aun nuestra juventud era el signo feliz.

Nos protegíamos de los pequeños
 y oscuros profesores.
 Ni las lenguas ni el miedo pudieron contenernos.
 ¡Cómo, de pronto, fuiste todo el amor!
 Siempre estabas conmigo.
 Mirábamos la tarde en los canales
 correr bajo los puentes
 seguida por las aguas, perderse
 en los oscuros remolinos del Hudson.
 El frío quemaba nuestros ojos, endurecía
 la yerba, hacía ásperas mis manos.³⁸

From the moment when the lover is introduced into the poem, "Tampoco tu me viste, niña mía," there is a negative tone and image. The reader is told that, like the "ojos inexpresivos" of the Hyde Park apartment, this lover does not truly see him either. The love they shared flourished for a brief time only. It was a spark, a flash as quick to have appeared ("apareciste . . . / apareciste . . . / de repente . . .") as to have died. The overwhelming use of the past tense and imperfect throughout the verses emphasizes that this was a period now completely over and finished. Physical love was a lasting solution for neither Padilla nor Neruda, and Padilla's continued emptiness echoes the final lines of Neruda's "Cuerpo de mujer":

Oscuros cauces donde la sed eterna sigue,
 y la fatiga sigue, y el dolor infinito.³⁹

Ironically, even in the height of their passion, the positive images evoked by Padilla are intermingled with those of coldness, darkness, and fleeing:

Nos protegíamos de los pequeños
y oscuros profesores.
Ni las lenguas ni el miedo pudieron contenernos.
.
. . . , perderse
en los oscuros remolinos del Hudson.
El frío quemaba nuestros ojos, endurecía
la yerba, hacía ásperas mis manos,
.⁴⁰

The description of the fleeting afternoon sunset mirrored in the canal waters is a lyrical metaphor for the relationship. Like the reflection rapidly disappearing into the dark Hudson, their love was also fading. The bright light of their passion dissolved into the dark whirlpools of memory.

Woven throughout the following stanza are verses which reinforce the concept that the love was ill-fated. The line, "No era el tiempo del amor ni el de la calma" echoes the first two lines of the poem:

No te fue dado el tiempo del amor
ni el tiempo de la calma. . . .⁴¹

From this point on, all has become a memory, inaccessible and distant: he does not see her. He wanders in strange places. She disappears with the dust and the wind, and he continues searching:

Nos amamos en el tiempo en que debíamos sufrir.
(No era el tiempo del amor ni el de la calma.)
Ahora aquí hay otros cuerpos.
No te veo. Yo cruzo sitios desconocidos
y tú te alejas en el polvo y el viento,
mezclada a extrañas apariciones; tus dedos
en mi abrigo prefiguran el viejo escalofrío;
y yo camino entre las cosas, siempre
detrás de ti, tan fina y ágil,
.⁴²

By the end of the section, the images have grown more and more frigid ("deshielo . . . / nieves . . . / niebla helada . . .") and life

becomes a bigger struggle as it nurtures "horror, sueño y blasfemia."
Indeed, the poet speaks for the reader when he comments, "... que
extraño / amor fue aquel amor!":

Y cuando cruje el deshielo,
(sé en que lugar estás, frente a que nieves)
y el pescador en la niebla helada
ve ese mundo deshecho vivo sobre sus viejas
plantas como lo vimos juntos en New England),
y la vida sigue nutriendo horror, sueño y blasfemia;
niña mía, amor que salvo
de la lucha y del caos, te extiendes callada
en lo profundo,
te agitas en mi cama, bajo mi pecho.
Y hasta la impura condición que aviva
nuestros cuerpos, quiere hacerse gloriosa.

(Quien me lea mañana, dirá: ¡qué extraño
amor fue aquel amor!)⁴³

The fourth and last section of the poem rounds out its narration.
In it, Padilla recognizes for an instant that joy ("la dicha, el goce")
can return; that lamps can shine their light in the best or worst of
times. Yet the brief moment of optimism gives way to resignation and an
acceptance of the role of fate:

Escucha: la dicha puede renacer.
El goce vacila, se alza; de pronto reaparece.
Las lámparas iluminan
una zona de guerra u otra zona de paz.
La flor espera en su tallo el tiempo que la rija.
Tus propios instantes
deciden su temblorosa eternidad.⁴⁴

In the last five lines of the poem, the poet comes full circle and
repeats the central theme of the work. Had he received a different set
of "dones," he might have sung with the hope and freshness of a happy child:

Y a mí no me fue dado
el tiempo del amor. El tiempo en que podía
ennoblecerme como un niño;

entrar, cantar erguido y limpio como un niño
frente a la eternidad.⁴⁵

Looked at in its totality, the poem carries the reader through an extensive and seemingly autobiographical review of the poet's experiences. It is Padilla's treatment of time and memory which in itself becomes one of the themes present in the book. The reader is transported to and enveloped by the distant places, people, and events which the poet recalls with a mixture of nostalgia and disappointment.

Paradoxically, even though Padilla remembers his own childhood sadly, there is little bitterness in the past he describes throughout El justo tiempo humano. He repeatedly places his own frustrations within the setting of a tender memory. In the first stanzas of "Padres e hijos," this dicotomy is clear. The speaker entwines the innocence of his childhood with the "casas desesperadas" of his youth:

Padres e hijos

Y nuevamente en sueños
la puerta se abre. El aire aviva
lo abatido, lo yerto.
Yo entro,
yo transcurro invisible,
casas desesperadas mías de mi niñez,
de mi inocencia.

De cada patio
y cada árbol y cada pueblo
hemos partido.
Transcurimos apenas
entre los varios rostros y partimos.
Nunca nos detuvimos en la dicha.
En la estación de trenes,
entre los campesinos y los alamos,
ícómo nos pesan la nostalgia
y el adiós proferido con rabia
mientras nos mira imperturbable
el hombrecillo constante de la miseria!⁴⁶

This juxtaposition of what is negative (his personal history) and what is beautiful (the past itself) creates a tension in his poetry and an intangible, almost magical aura around his images in El justo tiempo humano.

In "Barrio sin luz" from Crepusculario, Neruda also looks back on his childhood. Though more negative and embittered in tone, the poem is not unlike Padilla's in content. When seen from the perspective of the on-going misery of the present, the past's romanticized nostalgia ("las estrellas . . . / las ventanas luminosas . . . / el campo verde") gives way to a negative vision of reality in Neruda's poem:

Barrio sin luz

¿Se va la poesía de las cosas
o no la puede condensar mi vida?
Ayer--mirando el último crepúsculo--
yo era un manchón de musgo entre unas ruinas.

Las ciudades--hollines y venganza--
la cochinated gris de los suburbios,
la oficina que encorva las espaldas,
el jefe de ojos turbios.

. . . Sangre de un arrebol sobre los cerros,
sangre sobre las calles y las plazas,
dolor de corazones rotos,
pobre de hastíos y de lágrimas.

Un río abraza el arrabal como una
mano helada que tienta en las tinieblas;
sobre sus aguas
se avergüenzan de verse las estrellas.

Y las casas que esconden los deseos
detrás de las ventanas luminosas
mientras afuera el viento
lleva un poco de barro a cada rosa.

. . . Lejos . . . la bruma de las olvidanzas
--humos espesos, tajamares rotos--

y el campo ¡el campo verde! en que jadean
los bueyes y los hombres sudorosos.

. . . Y aquí estoy yo, brotado entre las ruinas,
mordiéndolo solo todas las tristezas,
como si el llanto fuera una semilla
y yo el único surco de la tierra.⁴⁷

Like "Dones," Padilla's "Puerta de golpe" is a return to a time gone by. Here, the old home town is seen through nostalgic, yet resigned eyes. While "aquel pueblo" is romanticized in its description, it is colored with a pervading melancholy. Perhaps the poet himself never experienced that happier moment which his mother recounted . . . In any case, even if at one time this was the way things were, they are no longer so.

Puerta de golpe

Me contaba mi madre
que aquel pueblo corría como un niño
hasta perderse:
que era como un incienso
aquel aire de huír
y estremecer los huesos hasta el llanto;
que ella lo fue dejando,
perdido entre los trenes y los alamos,
clavado siempre
entre la luz y el viento.⁴⁸

In this short poem, Padilla presents his pueblo as his mother described it. The explicit images as well as the poem's structure mirror its content. Specifically, Padilla's choice of tenses enhances the poem's meaning. The poet's use of the imperfect at the beginning of the poem ("contaba" and "corría") gives the sense of on-going action which, while in the past, acquires a certain "timelessness." The reader is free to imagine the mother telling tales then, and perhaps even now.

The town, similarly, seems accessible: it used to run like a child . . . does it still?

The change to the infinitive in the middle lines of the poem, however, distances the action from the subject. "Huir" and "estremecer" replace the more personal imperfect. Like the memory of the town itself, the poem's images are becoming less concrete. In the end, the participles emphasize the "pastness" of the memory and its finality. Time stops still, and the pueblo is finally seen "perdido" and "clavado" forever in the mind's eye.

In "Exilios," the poet shows how youth disappears and gives way to the continual search for fulfillment. Once again, Padilla's central motif is the past which, as difficult as it may have been, is nonetheless somewhat romanticized and remembered with longing. In "Exilios," the Cuban poet recalls the protection that the past once offered and contrasts that memory with the harshness of the present:

Exilios

Madre, todo ha cambiado.
Hasta el otoño es un soplo ruinoso
que abate el bosquecillo.
Ya nada nos protege contra el agua
y la noche.

Todo ha cambiado ya.
La quemadura del aire entra
en mis ojos y en los tuyos,
y aquel niño que oías
correr desde la oscura sala,
ya no ríe.

Ahora todo ha cambiado.
Abre puertas y armarios
para que estalle lejos esa infancia
apaleada en el aire calino;
para que nunca veas el viejo y pedregoso

camino de mis manos,
para que no me sientas deambular
por las calles de este mundo
ni descubras la casa vacía
de hojas y de hombres
donde el mismo de ayer sigue
buscando soledades, anhelos.⁴⁹

Even though the past, itself, is not seen as a panacea or idyllic refuge—even then protection was needed "contra el agua y la noche," and the boy of the second stanza ran away from "la oscura sala"—it is nonetheless seen as a safer or more peaceful time than the present. Now ("ya") there is no protection from those elements:

Ahora todo ha cambiado.⁵⁰

The cutting wind and cold beat down and burn, and the path of the poet's life has been "viejo y pedregoso." If ever he did, indeed, laugh, he does so no longer. Instead, he now wanders "por las calles de este mundo" without hope. His has been a path of emptiness and despair that he does not wish his own mother to see. The last two lines of the poem emphasize the hopelessness now experienced; there is a sense that the search within himself will never end:

. . . el mismo de ayer sigue
buscando soledades, anhelos.⁵¹

Padilla's poem, which looks back at the loss of youth with melancholy, echoes the sentiment expressed in Darío's "Canción de otoño en primavera" from his Cantos de vida y esperanza:

Juventud, divino tesoro
¡ya te vas para no volver!
Cuando quiero llorar, no lloro . . .
y a veces lloro sin querer . . .
.

En vano busqué a la princesa
que estaba triste de esperar.
La vida es dura. Amarga y pesa,
¡Ya no hay princesa que cantar!⁵²

From the treatment of the past and its remembrance, in El justo tiempo humano, Padilla slowly turns to addressing political and social issues. Most of the poems in the book primarily uncover Padilla's frustrated, unfulfilled dreams of yesterday--and metaphorically those of Cuba's youth--as well as some of the events experienced by the poet while traveling. However, the poems in the last part of the work are explicitly pro-revolutionary. In the emerging revolution, Padilla finds the hope and purpose for which he has been searching. Before these final poems, however, three transitional poems are found in which the poet's new direction is visible: "De tiempo en tiempo, la guerra," "Rondas y poemas para los niños desconsolados de Occidente," and "Ronda de la pájara pinta."

"De tiempo en tiempo, la guerra" depicts the poet turning towards a socio-political concern: war. This poem varies from the ones already discussed in that the past is not itself thematic. A new subject, war and man's nature, is addressed. This shift will eventually lead Padilla to an almost solely political poetry; here the reader finds early seeds to the concerns that will encompass his work later. In this poem, the resigned speaker discusses how "la guerra" comes about. While the center stanza of the poem rationalizes that war is often accepted because it is seen as a temporary evil borne of confusion or misunderstanding, in the last stanza, the excuses are rejected and a final verdict is presented: man is the ultimate cause of war.

The poem's first stanza provides its setting and introduction. Here, war is presented as an inevitable fact with a life and power--like a wild animal's--of its own:

De tiempo en tiempo, la guerra

De tiempo en tiempo
la guerra viene a revelarnos
y habituarnos a una derrota,
pacientes. Y con el ojo seco
vemos la ruta por donde apareció
la sangre.
.⁵³

In the following lines, war is seen as a habitual and historical reality which resounds everywhere as a knock on man's door: "todas las puertas lo reciben." War becomes a wandering wolf. The poet's use of the present tense in the first nine lines of the piece subtly and effectively emphasizes the repetitive and permanent nature of the unwelcomed "lobo." In the following four lines the reader is told that the wolf's howl may be confused with cries of "animales queridos / subitamente ciegos." Such blindness is perhaps the rationalization or philosophical justifications so frequently present at the onset of wars. Those who ardently wish to believe that opening their doors to war will bring positive changes and heal a wounded people are likely to allow their optimistic fervor to confuse evil with "animales queridos." As the stanza continues, however, it becomes evident that when war knocks, there is no place for such compassion. The "war-wolf" is an urgent and powerful force which pounds with such strength that "no hubo nunca maderos que resistieran." It is impossible to block its reappearance:

De tiempo en tiempo,
cuando la guerra da su golpe,

todas las puertas lo reciben,
y tú escuchabas el llamado
y lo confundías
con animales queridos
subitamente ciegos.
Y en realidad, nunca sonó la aldaba
con tanta inminencia,
golpes tan vehementes.
No hubo nunca maderos que resistieran.
.⁵⁴

In the final stanza of the poem, which returns to the use of the simple present tense, the wolf's true identity is exposed. No longer a wandering animal outside the poet's door, evil is seen as dwelling within man himself. The poet's personal identification with this evil is made clear as the "ojo seco" of the first stanza now turns inward and recognizes that only man can claim responsibility for the bloody path of war:

De tiempo en tiempo,
Vienes a echarte entre los hombres,
lobo habitual, mi semejante.⁵⁵

While "De tiempo en tiempo, la guerra" deals with war and evil in rather universal terms, in "Rondas y poemas para los niños desconsolados de Occidente," Padilla begins to question specifically the political philosophy of the western world. Traumatized by war, the poet--and certainly his Cuban pueblo--suffers from a loss of innocence and faith in the concepts that were once the essence of his ideology.

The first stanza of the poem expresses three wishes--three commands--which would alleviate the unhappiness felt by the children of "Occidente." Each wants to return to the children a part of their youth which seemingly has been robbed: playfulness and peace, caring hands and hope, faith and joy:

Rondas y poemas para los niños
desconsolados de Occidente

Entrégales
tus globos de colores,
tus trompos más hermosos
y un campo de ocio por el que nunca
cruce el cuervo.
Dales razones,
manos que les sostengan la esperanza.
Dales vidrios
de aumento que multipliquen
una y mil veces
la alegría.⁵⁶
.

The bounty of the first stanza quickly disappears in the second as the reader learns why these children need what most children can take for granted. The image evoked in the following lines is desolated and silenced; the children do not play, and the only movement comes from the black "urraca." It is significant that even this one sign of life--the urraca--does not fly here; it merely hops in the empty playground:

En Occidente
han cerrado los parques
infantiles.
Las rondas cesaron
de girar; en la tarde morada,
¡mira saltar la urraca
de los antiguos mitos!⁵⁷
.

The final stanza of the poem is filled with the despair and anguish of the times. The commands in the first seven lines of this section no longer express wishes for happiness and playthings, instead they show that there is hunger in the land, and that the children's toys have been replaced by weapons. The image of the "urraca" introduced in the second stanza is echoed again in the flight and cries "de los pájaros tristes":

Cómprales pan,
 cómprales un fusil mas duro
 que la lucha de clases;
 dispararé con ellos
 --niños occidentales--
 entre el vuelo y los gritos
 de los pájaros tristes.
⁵⁸

In the final nine verses of the stanza, the disillusionment with the western approach is clearly stated. What once seemed "solidas batientes" are now eroding to the insane philosophy "de Occidente." These walls, which represented all in which faith had been placed, are now being attacked by the enemy waters of the Western world. The poet will join in arms with the children and search for a way that will bring bread and joy into their lives again. The revolution offers a quiet assurance particularly since from the western, imperialistic voices, nothing but loud defenses are heard in the dark night of realization:

¡Ay, rondas salvajes!
 ¡Ay, sólidas batientes
 socavadas
 por un agua enemiga!
 La vieja noche de Occidente
 viene a explicar
 por todos su megáfonos
 que aún hay razones
 para su locura.⁵⁹

In the simple "Ronda de la pájara pinta," a children's song is slowly transformed and altered to create a shocking metamorphosis. As in "Rondas y poemas para los niños desconsolados de Occidente," in this work, a bird is also used symbolically by the poet; here, however, it is central to the development of the poem. Historically, birds represent poetic symbols of freedom and liberty. In these two poems, the deteriorating "pájara pinta" as well as the "pájaros tristes," offer a sharp

and joyless contrast to their traditional symbolic meaning. The birds do not fly freely; there is no liberty. "La pajara pinta" of the poem's refrain takes on four different costumes, and with each variation mirrors the disintegrating society that the poet acknowledges with growing horror. The lively and colorful bird of the original ronda becomes old and trembling, deaf and songless, blind and bleeding, and finally lifeless . . . flapping its wings with terror:

Ronda de la pájara pinta

(Con una niña dentro o fuera o con una niña
dentro y otra fuera de la ronda.)

Estaba la pájara pinta
sentada en su verde limón,
con el pico recoge la rama
con la rama recoge la flor.

Estaba la pájara vieja
derribada en el viejo rincón,
con su pata remueve las plumas
agitadas de un duro temblor.

Estaba la pájara sorda
entonando una sorda canción.

Estaba la pájara ciega
empapando de sangre su flor.

Estaba la pájara muerta
agitando unas alas de horror.
Sobre la alta cumbrera volaba
su osamenta desnuda de ardor.

Y en el álamo seco y añoso,
mas veleta que pájaro, amor,
estaba la pájara pinta,
estaba la pájara vieja,
estaba la pájara sorda,
estaba la pájara ciega,
estaba la pájara muerta.⁶⁰

In the process of becoming less and less centered on his own past while becoming more and more aware of the world around him, Padilla's poetic voice becomes increasingly universal. This is a crucial stage in the development of his poetry. He no longer merely focuses on himself, his own past, and personal childhood, but rather, begins to identify with other children throughout the world and with humanity in general. The transition signals a broadening social awareness and a movement towards a recognition of his role as a poet. This poetic and thematic development is evident in "Retrato del poeta como un duende joven."

"Retrato del poeta como un duende joven" paints a romantic picture of the poet's vision while depicting his role as "observer-recipient-participant" of the life which surrounds him. The first three sections of the poem describe the poet and address him directly in the familiar second person; in effect, Padilla is speaking to and about himself. The fourth section, however, is directed at man--"Hombre." In this final section, Padilla makes a plea for compassion toward poets; they, after all, suffer, tremble, and are in essence "everyman."

The first stanza of the poem serves as an introduction to the rest of the work. Here, the premise that the poet is omniscient and omnipresent is carefully developed; his creative source is as vast as the night and as expansive as the sea. He throws his net into the night, and it returns full of life. Paradoxically, the poet must both participate in and distance himself from the rough waters of his surroundings, thus it is fitting that Padilla's solitary poet is seen as "suspense"--yet tossed about--in the currents of life:

Retrato del poeta como
un duende joven

I

Buscador de muy agudos ojos
hundes tus nasas en la noche. Vasta es la noche
pero el viento y la lámpara,
las luces de la orilla,
las olas que te levantan con un golpe de vidrio
te abrevian, te resumen
sobre la piedra en que estás suspenso,
donde escuchas, discurre,
das fe de amor, en lo suspenso.⁶¹
.....

As the second stanza of Part I continues, the reader perceives that the poet carries a bit of all humanity within him. He walks with the condemned man as much as with the killer and deals with what is base and vulgar ("la casa del ahorcado") as much as with what is lofty and ethereal ("las estrellas"). He is a part of all things, and all things accumulate in him:

Oculto,
suspenso como estás frente a esas aguas,
caminas invisible entre las cosas.
A medianoche
te deslizas con el hombre que va a matar.
A medianoche
andas en el hombre que va a morir.
Frente a la casa del ahorcado
pones la flor del miserable.
Bajo los equilibrios de la noche
tu vigilia hace temblar las estrellas más fijas
Y el himno que se desprende de los hombres
como una historia,
entra desconocido en otra historia.
Se aglomeran en ti
formas que no te dieron a elegir,
que no fueron nacidas de tu sangre.⁶²
.....

Part II of the poem further amplifies the ideas of the first. The poet follows any path and enters any place where men gather, and there,

he is filled with the cries and the voices of his brothers. The concept that the poet is an "everyman" is again reinforced with the line: "te sorprendes multiplicado en los espejos . . ." He sees himself in all of the people whom he encounters, and he is somehow disarmed by mankind: ". . . no puedes hablar . . . / no puedes huir . . . / no puedes herir . . ." The poet succumbs to the masses and by his feelings of kindred toward them. The repeated use of the simple present tense creates a sense that the poet's role and calling (as seen by his activities and involvement in his world) have not only been constant in the past but will also continue forever into the future:

II

En galerías
por las que pasa la noche;
en los caminos
donde dialogan los errantes;
al final de las vías
donde se juntan los que cantan
(una taberna, un galpón derruido)
llegas de capa negra,
te sorprendes multiplicado en los espejos;
no puedes hablar
porque te inundan con sus voces amadas;
no puedes huir
porque te quiebran de repente sus dones;
no puedes herir
porque en ti se han deshecho las armas.⁶³

In Section III of the poem, Padilla shifts the focus slightly from what the poet does to what his surroundings create for him. The entire stanza gives example after example of specific events which the poet feels are the palette for his art. Thus, in Padilla's poem, the entire world, with its children, women, and dreams, ultimately exists to be seen and absorbed by poets. The poet sees, reaches out to, and

identifies with the life around him; in the depth of hopelessness and emptiness, it is he alone who can provide comfort:

III

La vida crece, arde para ti.
La fuente suena en este instante sólo para ti.
Todo es llegar
(las puertas fueron abiertas con el alba
y un vientecillo nos anima)
todo es poner las cosas en su sitio.
Los hombres se levantan
y construyen la vida para ti.
Todas esas mujeres
están pariendo, gritando, animando a sus hijos
frente a ti.
Todos esos niños
están plantando rosas enormes
para el momento en que sus padres
caigan de bruces en el polvo que has conocido ya.
Matas,
pero tu vientre tiembla como el de ellos
a la hora del amor.
En el trapecio salta esa muchacha,
un cuerpo tenso y hermoso, solo para ti.
Tu corazón dibuja el salto.
Ella quisiera caer, a veces, cuando no hay nadie
y todo se ha cerrado,
pero encuentra tu hombro.
Estás temblando abajo.
Duermen,
pero en la noche lo que existe es tu sueño.
Abren la puerta
en el silencio y tu soledad los conturba.
Por la ventana a que te asomas
te alegran las hojas
del árbol que, de algún modo, has plantado tú.⁶⁴

Padilla carries the reader through a wide breadth of the human experience. The first line of the section states that "La vida crece, arde para ti . . ." and in the following verses, Padilla portrays images which support this initial concept. All occurs for the eyes of the poet because he, alone, can dream in the midst of others who merely sleep. Life belongs to the poet, and he experiences and absorbs its joy and

agony. The third section begins with dawn ("el alba") and follows through several stages of growth and maturity. The effect is not unlike a masterful chronology which carries the reader from the dawn of life and birth ("... esas mujeres / están pariendo...") to death ("... el momento en que sus padres / caigan de bruces en el polvo..."); all occurs for the heart and pen of the poet.

By the end of the third section, however, Padilla has so intricately interwoven the relationship between the world at large and the poet that it is impossible to separate the two. In the final lines of the section, the poet's role has become much more than one of observer-receiver-participant; he is now a creator and originator as well. Thus, the poet obtains a more universal and expansive status as Padilla makes connections between the artist and everything with which he comes in touch. All along, events have occurred for the poet--"para ti"--but now, he not only sees what the world is presenting in his honor, but actually becomes the creator of those moments: the tree has leaves which cheer the poet's heart, but somehow, he is responsible for having planted the tree in the first place. In addition, he is able to offer his shoulder and comfort when "no hay nadie / y todo se ha cerrado..." Thus, the poet's role has been elevated to acquire the characteristics of a redeemer. The theme of the poet as the savior of humanity will be further developed in the final section of the poem.

In Part IV of the work, the poet is indeed clearly depicted with almost Christ-like attributes. A review of the poem surfaces motifs which enhance the idea of the poet as redeemer; the verses are filled

with hope and compassion: "buscador de muy agudos ojos . . . / caminas invisible entre las cosas . . . / pones la flor del miserable . . . / porque en ti se han deshecho las armas . . . / la fuente suena en este instante . . . / las puertas fueron abiertas . . . / los hombres / construyen la vida . . . / esos niños / están plantando rosas enormes . . . / pero encuentra tu hombro . . . / lo que existe es tu sueño . . . / el poeta defiende los signos de tu heredad . . . / él tiembla y te levanta . . . / una tabla de salvación . . ." The poet alone is able to truly comprehend, and thus, only he can find beauty in the common occurrences of life.

Padilla pleads to mankind ("hombre") that the poet be given the most meager assistance so that he may somehow survive. By this point in the poem, the poet is seen as being everywhere ("en todas partes / como un duende joven") and feeling every human pain ("testificando a la hora del sacrificio / ardiendo, / apaleado . . . / él tiembla . . ."). He, in fact, defends "los signos de tu [man's] heredad"; it is as though the fate of humanity--the essence of what makes man human--lies in the poet's often exhausted hands. Humanity falls, and the poet is there to lift it up; he alone has understood its pain and its beauty, and he alone has been there to offer solace:

IV

Hombre:
en cualquier sitio,
testificando a la hora del sacrificio;
ardiendo,
apaleado por alguien
y amado de los ensueños colectivos;
en todas partes
como un duende joven,

el poeta defiende los signos de tu heredad.
Donde tú caes y sangras
el tiembla y te levanta.
Concédele
una tabla de salvación
para que flote al menos,
para que puedan resistir sus brazos
temblorosos o torpes.⁶⁵

As Padilla expands his own view of the role and importance of the poet, he moves further away from his own, personal tragedy toward more universal themes and a higher social consciousness. With a troubled and unhappy childhood followed only by an unfulfilled and empty adulthood in the midst of a deteriorating society, it is not surprising that Padilla welcomed the social and political changes promised by the new and developing Cuban revolution. Once he turns his thoughts and commitment to this cause, his devotion permeates his poetry. At last, the future seems positive as hope and enthusiasm appear for the first time in his work.

In "Pancarta para 1960," Padilla addresses all of those who took advantage of others and tells them that their moment of power has ended. He addresses those who have suffered and tells them that their time to triumph is at hand. Justice, at last, has appeared in the shape of the revolution:

Pancarta para 1960

Usureros, bandidos, prestamistas,
adiós.
Os ha borrado el fuego
de la Revolución.

Las manos populares
os han segado de tal modo
que nunca habréis de renacer.

Para vosotros terminé.
Para vosotros, muerte; y si queréis,
amén.

Los que sudaban
frente al horno, siglo tras siglo;
los que sangraban
soplan hoy las hogueras
donde arden los tributos, los papeles
de usura y privilegio.

Mirad sus hijos
que os contemplan. No veis furia
en sus ojos.
Ellos son las razones
para estos padres justicieros.⁶⁶

The tables of justice have turned, and those who were once abused and mistreated now have the upper hand. Padilla's use of the "vosotros" form ("os") is effective because it establishes a distance and sarcastic tone which emphasizes the way the lower classes had been exploited until the coming of the revolution. "Las manos populares" had always had to be polite and reverend to the "usureros" and "prestamistas" who in turn could treat the common pueblo like slaves. But conditions have changed, and the new generation looks at the emerging fairness and justice without "furia en sus ojos."

The radical change in style and form from "Ronda de la pájara pinta" agrees with and heightens the content of "Pancarta para 1960." Padilla uses direct address, free verse, and no set rhyme scheme to express the hopeful future he now envisions. Thus, the freedom stated in the content of the poem is mirrored by its relaxed and unconstrained format.

Padilla's social and political inclinations have a precedent in another Cuban poet, José Martí, who is considered a precursor of Rubén

Darío's modernist movement. Martí's work, follows a trajectory not unlike Padilla's. According to Gómez-Gil, Martí is:

"... el artista consciente de su arte, el hombre de grandes inquietudes morales, metafísicas y político-sociales, y el carácter firme del héroe Idealista y revolucionario práctico; artista y político; consagrado a la elevación del hombre y de la humanidad: ofrendó su vida a la independencia de Cuba, pero defendió la libertad de todos los hombres."⁶⁷

Indeed, in many stanzas of his Versos sencillos, Martí expresses the hope for a better future as well as an identification and sympathy with the common pueblo similar to Padilla's final poems in El justo tiempo humano:

Versos Sencillos

Yo he visto al águila herida
Volar al azul sereno,
Y morir en su guarida
La víbora del veneno.

.

Todo es hermoso y constante,
Todo es música y razón,
Y todo, como el diamante,
Antes que luz es carbón.

.

III

Odio la máscara y vicio
Del corredor de mi hotel:
Me vuelvo al manso bullicio
de mi monte de laurel.

Con los pobres de la tierra
Quiero yo mi suerte echar
El arroyo de la sierra
Me complace más que el mar.⁶⁸

.

Padilla's "Como un animal"⁶⁹ (already discussed in the first chapter) and "El justo tiempo humano" carry the same message as does

"Pancarta para 1960."⁷⁰ The injustices of the past--its misery, deprivation, starvation, and filth--are making way for a new era of rebirth. The poet echoes the joyful cry of his pueblo when he pounds his fist on a table and shouts, "¡Ya hemos hecho justicia!"

In "El justo tiempo humano," there is an overwhelming sense of hope and unity as the lifelessness and inertia of the past are invigorated by the equality and justicia that the revolution predicts. With the familiar "tú" of the second stanza, Padilla speaks to many: himself, other poets, and those who dream of a better tomorrow. It is time for all to awaken, for a new age of righteousness is dawning:

El justo tiempo humano
¡Mira la vida al aire libre!
Los hombres remontan los caminos
recuperados
y canta el que sangraba.

Tú, soñador de dura pupila,
rompe ya esa guarida de astucias
y terrores.
Por el amor de tu pueblo, ¡despierta!
El justo tiempo humano va a nacer.⁷¹

From its first line, the poem contrasts acutely with the hopelessness expressed in other poems. The flightless birds and hungry, unhappy children have been displaced by the hope brought on by the revolution. Now life can once again be lived out in the open and freely. Optimism overflows as the poet gazes at the new society and finds the liberty which had for so long been repressed. He need no longer "silbar" against the world; he need no longer have the reproachful, self-critical, and cerebral approach to life ("... soñador de dura pupila /

rompe ya esa guarida de astucias / y terrores . . .") for now "el justo tiempo humano va a nacer" within "la vida al aire libre!"

As in "El justo tiempo humano," Padilla directs his questions in "Ahora que estás de vuelta" to a second person. Here, more clearly than in the previous poem, the poet presents a picture of a man so overwhelmed by the inequities, horror, and disaster he has witnessed in the past that he has difficulty believing the changes which are now taking place. The poem is a sketch of the Cuban people and a self-portrait of the emerging role of the poet, himself, in his new society. Hands that could only write, "me muero" must now be trained to address the matters at hand--life and growth; the poet "está de vuelta":

Ahora que estás de vuelta

Dime, ahora que estás de vuelta
y trabajando de modo que el tuyo
no sea más un corazón de elegía,
¿ves crecer las ciudades
con tus ojos habituados al resplandor
de los desastres?
¿Oyes nacer los himnos
del amor y el trabajo
con tus oídos rotos por
tanta furia y tanta muerte?
¿Podrías describir el tamaño
del pueblo con tu lengua
de imágenes perecederas?
¿Has puesto entre las nobles
y útiles de tu gente, esas manos
que tiemblan, que solo
sabían escribir "me muero"?⁷²

The last poem of the book, "El árbol," is perhaps the most explicit example of the new faith that the poet has gained. In it, the past is no longer a point of focus, instead, the promise of the future is represented in the growth and health of a tree which was planted with

love. Loneliness, darkness, bloodshed, and despair are gone, and in their place stands a green tree which acts as a constant reminder to dream. Throughout the world--and within man, himself,--the quiet music of peace rings clearly once again:

El árbol

Estoy mirando como creció este árbol.

Ayer mismo--separando los grumos de la tierra--
lo plantamos, amor,
(era el último surco)
y te volviste hacia mi cuerpo sudoroso
y murmuraste el nombre de este árbol
que hoy levanta
su tamaño sonoro contra el viento.
Así sea la vida que soñamos.

Así sean los árboles que otras manos sencillas
coloquen cada día
en las tierras del mundo.
Así sea la música del hombre,
verde y serena y resonante.⁷³

Fully within the revolution, Padilla has had the strength and optimism to plant a tree and watch it grow. Unlike the unfulfilling "cuerpos" of the past, the woman now--his "amor"--is a meaningful helpmate and companion. They are both sharing in the joyful task of planting and nurturing the young tree. Unlike the closed doors and empty houses of his past, this tree stands tall against the winds and continues to strengthen. The poet's tree is not alone since "otras manos sencillas" (the same "manos populares . . . que sudaban / frente al horno, siglo tras siglo . . ." before the revolution) will now plant other such trees. Those who once had barely a life to call their own are now giving new life in the form of seedlings and seeing the doors of equality and opportunity opening before them. Yet with this poem, the

poet surpasses the specific Cuban situation and moves to a more universal plane. His is a vision that all hands of the world--not just the Cuban pueblo's--plant trees, and that together, their unity will echo the "música del hombre."

As expressed by the black Cuban poet, Nicolas Guillen--also writing at the onset of the revolution--each person finally had "lo que tenia que tener":

Tengo

Cuando me veo y toco,
yo, Juan sin Nada no más ayer,
y hoy Juan con Todo,
vuelvo los ojos, miro,
me veo y toco
y me pregunto como ha podido ser.
.

Tengo, vamos a ver,
que no hay guardia rural
que me agarre y me encierre en un cuartel,
ni me arranque y me arroje de mi tierra
al medio del camino real.
.

Tengo, vamos a ver,
que ya aprendí a leer,
a contar,
tengo que ya aprendí a escribir
y a pensar
y a reir.

Tengo que ya tengo
donde trabajar
y ganar
lo que me tengo que comer.

Tengo, vamos a ver,
Tengo lo que tenía que tener.⁷⁴

As Padilla's book ends, there is no reason to doubt that the freedom and hope regained through the revolution will grow and strengthen in the

coming years. The parks will open, houses will be built, work will be available, songs will be sung, . . . and fields will be planted with trees. With the help of the revolution, life--man's inner music--will continue to flow "verde y serena y resonante."

CHAPTER III

FUERA DEL JUEGO:

PADILLA THE DISILLUSIONED

In his introduction to Heberto Padilla's Provocaciones, Jose Mario states that the poet "se aferra a la revolución cubana como una formula de fé. . . . Es la fé con que una generación se entrega a las ideas revolucionarias como si se tratase de la salvación del alma. . . . Esto es lo que hay que tener en cuenta para poder asimilar el salto de El justo tiempo humano a Fuera del juego."75 Indeed, as Padilla becomes disenchanted with the new political order, the intensity with which he turned to the revolution is replaced by an equally intense rejection of its restrictions and encompassing control over the Cuban society.

Fuera del juego⁷⁶ reflects the struggle and disillusionment felt by Padilla. Later, commenting upon his work, the poet stated, "La historia como dificultad, chantaje, incluso asfixia, es el verdadero asunto de mi libro; cada poema, a veces inadvertidamente quiere reflejar al individuo y la historia, al hombre envuelto en conflictos políticos morales."⁷⁷

Fuera del juego is filled with small scenarios or slices of life which reflect the disintegrating state of Castro's Cuba in the late sixties. Recurring themes include images of the individual as powerless or impotent, the masses as applauding puppets, and the poet as the moral voice of the oppressed society. The pervading tone of the book is bitter, sarcastic, and often hopeless, while persecution, brute force, and masks or dark glasses are recurring motifs. In addition to the social and political commentary which these poems afford, the reader becomes aware of changes in the poet's self-perception. Ironically, the same revolution that Padilla and others embraced as their salvation has now totally failed them. As a consequence of this disillusionment, the role of the poet in his society is radically altered.

The first work of the collection, "En tiempos difíciles," summarizes Padilla's viewpoint and experience that the revolution demands and takes, bit by bit, the individual's freedom and voice. As the poem progresses, "aquel hombre" is asked to give up metaphorically parts of his body, each representing a different human right. He must give up his time, that he may fully devote it to the new society; his eyes, that he may see only what has been approved and thus not see injustice; his lips, that he may affirm the revolution; his hands and legs, that he may work and fight for the new order; his heart and soul, that he may be fully committed to the revolutionary ideals; his tongue, that he may not speak out against existing lies and atrocities; and finally, he is asked to leave because any unrest must be silenced, even through exile:

En tiempos difíciles

A aquel hombre le pidieron su tiempo
para que lo juntara al tiempo de la Historia.
Le pidieron las manos,
porque para una época difícil
nada hay mejor que un par de buenas manos.
Le pidieron los ojos
que alguna vez tuvieron lágrimas
para que contemplara el lado claro
(especialmente el lado claro de la vida)
porque para el horror basta un ojo de asombro.
Le pidieron sus labios
resecos y cuarteados para afirmar,
para erigir, con cada afirmación, un sueño
(el-alto-sueño);
le pidieron las piernas,
duras y nudosas,
(sus viejas piernas andariegas)
porque en tiempos difíciles
¿algo mejor que un par de piernas
para la construcción o la trinchera?
Le pidieron el pecho, el corazón, los hombros.
Le dijeron
que eso era estrictamente necesario.
Le explicaron después
que toda esta donación resultaría inútil
sin entregar la lengua,
porque en tiempos difíciles
nada es tan útil para atajar el odio o la mentira.
Y finalmente le rogaron
que, por favor, echase a andar,
porque en tiempos difíciles
ésta es, sin duda, la prueba decisiva.⁷⁸

The official response of the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC) to Padilla's "En tiempos difíciles" was both antagonistic and defensive. Indeed, according to the national organization, whatever La Revolución needed or requested should have been given willingly by any citizen; a small and personal sacrifice for the good of the society at large:

". . . Cuando Padilla expresa que se le arrancan sus órganos vitales y se le demanda que eche a andar, es la Revolución, exigente en los deberes colectivos quien desmembra al individuo y le pide que

funcione socialmente. En la realidad cubana de hoy, el despegue económico que nos extraerá del subdesarrollo exige sacrificios personales y una contribución cotidiana de tareas para la sociedad. Esta defensa del aislamiento equivale a una resistencia a entregarse en los objetivos comunes, además de ser una defensa de superadas concepciones de la ideología liberal burguesa . . ."

The theme of persecution developed in "En tiempos difíciles" is emphasized in "El discurso del método." Here, the poet speaks to any--even himself--who may not be prepared to flee at a moment's notice. The futility of trying to hide incriminating evidence or of burying valuables to keep them from being stolen is heightened by the sense that no one--not even the private chauffeur, gardener, or house-keeper--can be trusted; nothing can help "justificarte ante una policía . . ." As in "En tiempos difíciles," the individual is powerless against the strength of the political structure. The poem's sense of impending doom, the irreversibility of the political situation, are suffocating. There is nothing--no thing--that anyone can do. The last four lines of the poem close the door to all hope. Here, Padilla's use of the present continuous tense emphasizes that it is already too late for any action: ". . . Ya están quitando las barricadas . . . / Ya . . . están subiendo . . . / Ya . . . están allí aplaudiendo . . .":

El discurso del método

Si después que termina el bombardeo,
andando sobre la hierba que puede crecer lo mismo
entre las ruinas
que en el sombrero de tu Obispo,
eres capaz de imaginar que no estás viendo
lo que se va a plantar irremediabilmente delante de
tus ojos,
o que no estás oyendo
lo que tendrás que oír durante mucho tiempo todavía
o (lo que es peor)
piensas que será suficiente la astucia o el buen

this short poem indicates, here the poet sarcastically summarizes the necessary steps which must be taken in order to become a part of and achieve success in the new Cuba. The portrait he paints is one of an individual totally void of any personal opinion or philosophy; there exists only blind devotion to the revolutionary cause. As a result, "cada miembro" follows the same thoughtless path of submission to those in command. The poem's form, with its short, staccato-like lines, parallels the brief instructions that may appear in any manual or guide. The reader can actually imagine a line of peasant "soldiers" marching for, smiling at, and always applauding the revolutionary leaders while being rewarded for their loyalty:

Instrucciones para ingresar
en una nueva sociedad

Lo primero: optimista.
Lo segundo: atildado, comedido, obediente.
(Haber pasado todas las pruebas deportivas.)
Y finalmente andar
como lo hace cada miembro:
un paso al frente, y
dos o tres atrás:
pero siempre aplaudiendo.⁸¹

In "Oración para el fin de siglo," the poet bleakly recognizes the disillusionment of the present and the hopelessness of the future. In this section of the poem, Padilla again alludes to the orchestrated movements required of all within the present society:

... Nosotros, hijos y nietos ya de terroristas
melancólicos
y de científicos superticiosos,
que sabemos que en el día de hoy está el error
que alguien habrá de condenar mañana.
Nosotros, que estamos viviendo los últimos años
de este siglo,
deambulamos, incapaces de improvisar un

movimiento
que no haya sido consertado;
gesticulamos en un espacio mas restringido
que el de las lineas de un grabado;
nos ponemos las oscuras levitas
como si fuéramos a asistir a un parlamento . . .⁸²

The individual has lost his individuality; the events continued to take place regardless of the input or lack of input by any one person. As predicted by Fidel Castro, La Revolución now has its own momentum and offers an appearance of progress. Maintaining this appearance of harmony and success becomes a major concern of the political leaders; as a result, dissidents must be quieted immediately. In "Cantan los nuevos Césares," Padilla attacks the new society and sees through the pomp and circumstance of the times. It is ironic that the dreams with which he ended El justo tiempo humano are taking an unexpected and bitter turn: the "prestamistas" to whom he had said "adios" in "Pancarta para 1960"⁸³ are back, and the houses being built are for "los dictadores" rather than for the poor and needy. But despite these injustices, the work continues, building an empire which strays further and further away from the original ideals represented by the revolution but which gives the illusion ("avenidas / para llenarlas de fanfarria") of progress:

Cantan los nuevos Cesares

Nosotros seguimos construyendo el Imperio.
Es difícil construir un imperio
cuando se anhela toda la inocencia del mundo.
Pero da gusto construirlo
con esta lealtad
y esta unidad política
con que lo estamos construyendo nosotros.
Hemos abierto casas para los dictadores
y para sus ministros,
avenidas
para llenarlas de fanfarria

en la noche de las celebraciones,
establos para las bestias de carga, y promulgamos
leyes mas espontaneas
que verdugos,
y ya hasta nos conmueve ese sonido
que hace la campanilla de la puerta donde vino a
instalarse
el prestamista.
Todavía lo estamos construyendo.
Con todas las de la ley.⁸⁴

The preoccupation with superficial appearance is expanded in Padilla's "Arte y oficio." The theme of this short poem is sardonic, almost comic in its absurdity, because the task at hand is to build gallows that always maintain an aura of "inocencia." What Padilla leaves unstated is as provocative as what the poem describes--there appears to be no concern with true innocence and no expressed concern with whether or not the million heads that roll nightly have been fairly judged. Instead, entire lifetimes were devoted to the creation of a "guilt-proof" scaffold. Clearly, a parallel can be made between the patíbulo and the Revolución; both hide the atrocities committed under the disguise of innocence and idealism. In the final line of this poem, which is ironically dedicated to the censors, Padilla juxtaposes "verdugo" with "poeta." If the post-revolutionary poets followed the prescribed orders of the political regime, they would become governmental spokespersons. By ignoring the reality and the brutality occurring in Cuba, by their silence or acquiescence, poets would indeed become the hangmen of the oppressed. The internal conflict between what poets are being asked to do and what they feel is correct heightens; the resulting frustration will recur in other poems throughout the book:

Arte y oficio
A los censores

Se pasaron la vida diseñando un patíbulo
que recobrase--después de cada ejecución--
su inocencia perdida.
Y apareció el patíbulo,
diestro como un obrero de avanzada.
¡Un millón de cabezas cada noche!
Y al otro día más inocente
que un conductor en la estación de trenes,
verdugo y con tareas de poeta.⁸⁵

In addition to suffering the psychological abuse caused by being exiles in their own land, dissidents in Padilla's poetry often suffer physical cruelty and a loss of civil and human rights. Many of the scenes depicted in Fuera del juego are bloody and violent. They are back-alley glimpses at the injustices that Padilla saw occurring in Cuba on a daily basis.

The brief but intensely graphic "Escena" is like a short film or episode in which the viewer is not aware of all of the details and circumstances which lead up to the scene on the screen. The reader seems to be "walking in" on an event which took place moments before; the cause of the brutality pictured in the seven lines of Padilla's poem is left open to speculation:

Escena

¡No se pueden mezclar y las mezclamos.
Revolución y Religión no riman!

Se desgarraba el pobre bajo los reflectores,
contraído,
agachado,
esperando
el último bofetón.⁸⁶

The powerful image of this poem is mirrored in its form. With each participle ("contraído . . . / agachado . . . / esperando . . .") of the final verse, the reader can imagine a bleeding, bruised body convulsing and doubling over at each new "bofetón." The victim has no name and no personality, yet gains the reader's sympathy. He is so pitiful that even the narrator calls him, "el pobre." Ironically and in spite of this sentiment, there is apparently no way to stop the beating. The reader is as helpless and as much of a detached viewer as the writer seems to feel.

As harsh as "Escena" is Padilla's "Bajorrelieve para los condenados." In this poem, the poet describes the cruelty that prisoners and condemned men suffer under the cover at night. The poem is saturated with words which depict violence or death:

". . . puñetazo . . . / empujón . . . / lápida . . . / huesos . . . / mazmorra . . . patíbulo . . . / patadas . . . / verdugos . . .":

Bajorrelieve para los condenados

El puñetazo^{punch} en plena cara
y el empujón^{push} a media noche son la flor de los
condenados.^{grave}
El vamos, cono, y acaba de decirlo todo de una vez,
es el crisantemo de los condenados.
No hay luna mas radiante
que esa lápida^{tombstone} enorme que cae de noche entre los
condenados.
No hay armazón^{frame} que pueda apuntalar huesos de
condenado.^{prop of}
La peste y la luz encaramadas como una gata rodeando
la mazmorra;
todo lo que lanzó la propaganda
como quien dona un patibulo;
el Haga el amor no haga la guerra
(esos lemitas importados de Europa)
son patadas en los testículos de los condenados.
Los transeuntes que compran los periódicos del

Kick boxing!

mediodía
por pura curiosidad, son los verdugos de los
condenados.⁸⁷

What is particularly disturbing about so many of the poems depicting violence and lack of contentment is the matter-of-fact method in which these events are viewed by others in the poems. The injustices appear to be so common that observers no longer seem outwardly shocked by bloody bodies and screaming prisoners. The reader senses that people have resigned themselves to peeking through closed shutters at the events occurring outside their windows only to step back, unable or afraid to do anything to remedy the situation. Indeed, in two central lines of "Estado de sitio," Padilla indicates that in this terrible age, it would be better for man to be so detached that he would be void of all feeling: ". . . Dichosos los que miran como piedras, / más elocuentes que una piedra, porque la época es terrible . . ."88 The individual is forced to either agree with or to stop reacting and thinking about the changing socio-political structure. Dissidents become onlookers trapped in history; they are in essence prisoners of their own lifetime. This theme is developed in "El hombre al margen," "También los humillados," and "Una época para hablar":

El hombre al margen

El no es el hombre que salta la barrera
sintiéndose ya cogido por su tiempo, ni el fugitivo
oculto en el vagón que jadea
o que huye entre los terroristas, ni el pobre
hombre del pasaporte cancelado
que está siempre acechando una frontera.
El vive más acá del heroísmo
(en esa parte oscura);
pero no se perturba; no se extraña.
No quiere ser un héroe,

ni siquiera el romántico alrededor de quien
 pudiera tejerse una leyenda;
 pero está condenado a esta vida y, lo que más le
 aterra,
 fatalmente condenado a su época.
 Es un decapitado en la alta noche, que va de un cuarto
 al otro,
 como un enorme viento que apenas sobrevive con el
 viento de afuera.
 Cada mañana recomienza
 (a la manera de los actores italianos).
 Se para en seco como si alguien le arrebatara el
 personaje.
 Ningún espejo
 se atrevería a copiar
 este labio caído, esta sabiduría en bancarrota.⁸⁹

As for the Italian actors, every day signals the beginning of another rehearsal; unfortunately, the drama being played out is one of real life, and the actors are the Cuban pueblo "condenado a su epoca." This is the worst of all possible fates, for from here there is no possible hope of escaping. In "También los humillados," Padilla addresses humiliation and treats it like a despicable dog. Angrily, the poet recognizes that the ultimate power lies in History; the individual is again insignificant when seen in the light of the greater goals. "La Historia" is what happens, what continues to take place without the control of any one person. Padilla encourages the miserable individual to resist "el golpe [de] la Historia," but it is impossible. The events ("... nuevas fechas ... nombres") of the time are too important. According to revolutionary thought, if autonomy and individuality disappear, it is for the common good:

También los humillados

Ahí está nuevamente, la miserable humillacion,
 mirándote con los ojo del perro,
 lanzándote contra las nuevas fechas
 y los nombres.

¡Levántate, miedoso,
y vuelve a tu agujero como ayer, despreciado,
inclinando otra vez la cabeza,
que la Historia es el golpe que debes aprender a
resistir,
la Historia es ese sitio que nos afirma y nos
desgarra,
la Historia es esa rata que cada noche sube la
escalera,
la Historia es el canalla
que se acuesta de un salto también con la Gran Puta.⁹⁰

The National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC) responded to Padilla's sense of oppression by implying that the poet was anti-revolutionary. The writers' union based its conclusion on the simple premise that a true revolutionary believes that history will affirm the positive changes taking place in Cuba; obviously, Padilla thought otherwise:

... Al hablar de la historia [Padilla] ... ve la historia como un enemigo, como un juez que va a castigar. Un revolucionario no teme a la historia, la ve, por el contrario, como la confirmación de su confianza en la transformación de la vida. Pero Padilla apuesta sobre el error presente--sin contribuir a su enmienda--, y su escepticismo se abre paso ya sin límites, cerrando todos los caminos: el individuo se disuelve en un presente sin objetivos y no tiene absolución posible en la historia ...⁹¹

UNEAC was partly correct. Padilla did feel that all paths were closing in a meaningless existence. The fatalistic view that common man was no longer able to exert his own autonomy or to act against injustices is again stated in "Una época para hablar." Here, Padilla directly speaks to the trap into which poets have fallen and expresses the senselessness of his occupation when restrictions inhibit his creative and humanistic calling. Somberly, he compares the role and times of Greek and Roman poets to the "época" which holds the Cuban poets captive. The poem looks longingly--even enviously--at the freedom

enjoyed by ancient poets. They "tenían capacidad para exponer su mundo.
/ Eran hombres capaces en su mundo." In contrast, Cuban poets have
their poetic and socially conscious hands tied. They cannot depict
their "historia en marcha" because they are so consumed by it--so
controlled by ideologues--that there is no separation of art from life.
Poets cannot supersede la Historia which marches powerfully past--and
over--them:

Una época para hablar

Los poetas griegos y romanos
apenas escribieron sobre doncellas, lunas y flores.
Esto es cierto, MacLeish.
Y ahí están sus poemas que sobreviven:
con guerras, con política, con amor
(toda clase de amor),
con dioses, por supuesto, también
(toda clase de dioses)
con muertes
(las muchas y muy variadas formas de la muerte).
Nos mostraron su tiempo
(su economía, su política)
mucho mejor que aquellos con quienes convivían.
Tenían capacidad para exponer su mundo.
Eran hombres capaces en su mundo.
Su poesía era discurso público.
Llegaba a conclusiones.
Y a nosotros, ¿qué nos sobrevivirá,
atravesados como estamos por una historia en marcha,
sintiendo mas devoradoramente día tras día
que el acto de escribir y el de vivir se nos
confunden?⁹²

As the revolution further encroaches itself and affects the Cuban
society, the role of artists and poets also continues to change. During
the early stages of the revolution, poets and artists had experienced a
cultural renewal, but the freedom and enthusiasm originally felt soon
waned under the strict artistic restrictions imposed by the government.
In the title poem of the collection, "Fuera del juego," Padilla bitterly

reflects on the role of the poet caught in the midst of revolutionary fervor. As in "Una época para hablar," the poet specifically concerns himself with the internal conflicts which he experiences. No longer sustained by the vision and calling expressed in "Retrato del poeta como un duende joven,"⁹³ Padilla now feels that poets are misfits and outsiders within their own community. In the first half of the poem, the poet is seen as scorned by society and criticized by his peers. The images in this section of the poem suggest that the poet wears dark glasses both as a disguise and in order not to see "el sol que nace;" he refuses to acknowledge the rising but superficial "glory" promised by the revolution. In "Oración para el fin de siglo,"⁹⁴ the reader also saw the use of "oscuras levitas." These images of darkness, of remaining outside of the popular light, will recur throughout the work. In "Fuera del juego," Padilla sarcastically mirrors the opinion of those around him as he describes the poet as the "kill joy" bearer of bad news, the ill-humored seeker of catastrophes, the faithless doubter of all miracles. Indeed, there is no place for him; he should be ousted for being such a loner and such an unbending, antiquated character:

Fuera del juego

A Yannis Ritzos, en una cárcel de Grecia.

¡Al poeta, despídanlo!
Ese no tiene aquí nada que hacer.
No entra en el juego.
No se entusiasma.
No pone en claro su mensaje.
No repara siquiera en los milagros.
Se pasa el día entero cavilando.
Encuentra siempre algo que objetar.

A ese tipo, ¡despidanlo!
 Echen a un lado al aguafiestas,
 a ese malhumorado
 del verano,
 con gafas negras
 bajo el sol que nace.
 Siempre
 le sedujeron las andanzas
 y las bellas catástrofes
 del tiempo sin Historia.
 Es
 incluso
 anticuado.
 Solo le gusta el viejo Armstrong.
 Tararea, a lo sumo,
 una canción de Pete Seeger.
 Canta,
 entre dientes,
 La Guantanamera.⁹⁵

The reference to Pete Seeger's popular song, "Guantanamera," with lines from "Versos sencillos" by José Martí, is a clear indication of Padilla's own sense of patriotism. In spite of what may outwardly be judged by others as a lack of enthusiasm for his changing pueblo, in the final half of the poem, the poet makes clear why he remains outside of the political games he abhors:

Pero no hay
 quien lo haga abrir la boca,
 pero no hay quien lo haga sonreír
 cada vez que comienza el espectáculo
 y brincan
 los payasos por la escena;
 cuando las cacatúas
 confunden el amor con el terror
 y está crujiendo el escenario
 y truenan los metales
 y los cueros
 y todo el mundo salta, se inclina,
 retrocede,
 sonrío,
 abre la boca
 "pues sí,
 claro que sí,
 por supuesto que sí. . ."

y bailan todos bien,
bailan bonito,
como les piden que sea el baile.
¡A ese tipo, despídanlo!
Ese no tiene aquí nada que hacer.⁹⁶

It is effective that in the poem's second and final lines, the word "aquí" is located in the middle of the verse and is thus emphasized; here, in Castro's Cuba, there is no room for those who do not go along with the political status quo. Unwilling to become part of the mindless multitude (applauding puppets, jumping clowns) who can only smile and say, "Yes, sir . . . yes, sir," Padilla, other poets, and any nonconforming individual fall into the category of ostracized outsiders.

"Los poetas cubanos ya no sueñan" is another poem which further exemplifies the changing role and morale of the poet. The poet in "Ahora que estás de vuelta,"⁹⁷ who was spiritually alive again and had returned to his creative calling, is once more having to write "me muero." Those eyes that were once "habituados al resplandor de los desastres" but had adjusted to the hope of the revolution are again compelled to see and watch death, pain, and destruction. It is almost as though the clock had turned back and the reader was seeing that part of Padilla studied in the early poems of El justo tiempo humano. Now, in the height of the revolution, the poet is again alone, mistreated, and unable to affect his surroundings:

Los poetas cubanos ya no sueñan

Los poetas cubanos ya no sueñan
(ni siquiera por la noche)
Van a cerrar la puerta para escribir a solas
cuando cruje, de pronto, la madera;
el viento los empuja al garete;
unas manos los cojen por los hombros,

los voltean,
los ponen frente a otras caras

(Hundidas en pantanos, ardiendo en el napalm)
y el mundo encima de sus bocas fluye
y está obligado el ojo a ver, a ver, a ver.⁹⁸

Not only is the poet enveloped by the terrible acts which are being committed in the name of La Revolución, but he is also suffering from great disillusionment. All of the hope and energy, all of the faith and trust, all of the joy and optimism felt at the onset of the revolution are being washed away by the blood of political prisoners, the lack of personal freedom, and the injustices being committed behind closed doors. The dreamers and believers have been betrayed, thus, poetry turns from romantic lyricism to social commentary and political criticism. Padilla's work echoes the internal strife expressed by Pablo Neruda in "Explico algunas cosas:"

Explico algunas cosas

Preguntareis: Y dónde están las lilas?
Y la metafísica cubierta de amapolas?
Y la lluvia que a menudo golpeaba
sus palabras llenandolas
de agujeros y pajaros?

Os voy a contar todo lo que me pasa.

Yo vivía en un barrio
de Madrid, con campanas,
con relojes, con arboles.
.

Raul, te acuerdas?
Te acuerdas, Rafael?
Federico, te acuerdas
debajo de la tierra,
te acuerdas de mi casa con balcones en donde
la luz de junio ahogaba flores en tu boca?
¡Hermano, hermano!
.

Y una mañana todo estaba ardiendo
y una mañana las hogueras
salían de la tierra
devorando seres,
y desde entonces fuego,
pólvora desde entonces,
y desde entonces sangre.

Bandidos con aviones y con moros,
bandidos con sortijas y duquesas,
bandidos con frailes negros bendiciendo
venían por el cielo a matar niños
y por las calles la sangre de los niños
corría simplemente, como sangre de niños.
.

Preguntaréis por que su poesía
no nos habla del suelo, de las hojas,
de los grandes volcanes de su país natal?
Venid a ver la sangre por las calles,
venid a ver
la sangre por las calles,
venid a ver la sangre
por las calles!⁹⁹

Consumed by the need to continue writing and drawing from the life around him, while surrounded by what they saw as tragic, neither Neruda nor Padilla could distance themselves enough to ignore "la sangre por las calles." The repetition of the last three lines of Neruda's poem emphasizes its terrible vision, and Padilla achieves the same effect in "En lugar del amor." As expressed in the final lines of this poem, the images of death and oppression are so vivid and ever-present that they take the place other poetic themes, even love:

. . . Siempre, más allá de tus hombros
(es algo que ya nunca podremos evitar)
hay una lista de desaparecidos,
hay una aldea destruida,
hay un niño que tiembla.¹⁰⁰

The brutal reality which both Padilla and Neruda were forced to see--a ver--affected and almost replaced the poets' poetic vision. It

is significant that Franco's brutality (including Guernica and the disappearance of poet Federico García Lorca) made Neruda join the communist party, while Castro's oppression caused Padilla to condemn Cuba's communist revolution. Oppression and suppression of liberty were anathema to each poet, regardless of the regime from which it stemmed. Indeed, after the onslaught of the revolution, Padilla's poetic philosophy--his "poética"--is to tell the truth regardless of the consequences or danger:

Poética

Di la verdad.
Di, al menos, tu verdad.
Y después
deja que cualquier cosa ocurra:
que te rompan la página querida,
que te tumben a pedradas la puerta,
que la gente
se amontone delante de tu cuerpo
como si fueras
un prodigio o un muerto.¹⁰¹

As seen, throughout most of Fuera del juego, Padilla lashes out at the transgressions which are slowly but unequivocally being committed in the name of the revolution. The poems not only depict the harsh realities and injustices of daily life, but also a change in mood by the poet. Mere survival in Cuba is no longer sufficient; the cost has been too high and the suffering too great. As a result, whenever the poet is not embittered and cynical, he is resigned and hopeless, for revolutionary tides have crushed too many dreams against the rocks of censorship and distrust. The ends originally envisioned no longer seem to justify the means, as the individual becomes increasingly overshadowed by the collective ideals of the revolution. "Los viejos poetas, los

viejos maestros" carefully develops this concept. In spite of all of the events which are occurring, in spite of all that the newspapers of foreign ministers may laud, in spite of the silence of many older poets, life is barely worth living because there is always too much pain. The poet searches through all tangible documents and records for that which he can never find: peace of mind and relief from anguish:

Los viejos poetas, los viejos maestros

Los viejos poetas, los viejos maestros realmente duchos en el
terror de nuestra época, se han puesto todos a morir.
Yo sobrevivo, lo que pudiera calificarse de milagro, entre
los
jóvenes.
Examino los documentos:
los mapas, la escalada, las rampas de lanzamiento, las
sombrillas nucleares, la Ley del valor,
la sucia guerra de Viet Nam.
Yo, asisto a los congresos del tercer mundo y firmo
manifiestos
y mi mesa está llena de cartas y telegramas
y periódicos:
pero mi secreta y casi desesperante obsesión
es encontrar a un hombre,
a un niño,
a una mujer
capaces de afrontar este siglo
con la cabeza a salvo, con un juego sin riesgos
o un parto, por lo menos, sin dolor.¹⁰²

Padilla, caught in the trappings of revolutionary expectations, bitterly explains why others might never recognize him as a poet of value. In "No fue un poeta del porvenir" he shows that as others look at his work, they will acknowledge that he could comment on his surroundings, but they will say that he lacked the vision to see beyond the specific. Without explicitly stating so in this poem, Padilla is again feeling insignificant when compared to la historia which is taking shape around him. The details of his work, the preoccupations of his

themes will all look minuscule and petty. He "analizó las ruinas" but was unable to rebuild them into a future with vision:

No fue un poeta del porvenir

Dirán un día:
el no tuvo visiones que puedan añadirse a la
posteridad.
No poseyó el talento de un profeta.
No encontró esfinges que interrogar
ni hechiceras que leyeran en la mano de su muchacha
el terror con que oían
las noticias y los partes de guerra.
Definitivamente el no fue un poeta del porvenir.
Habló mucho de los tiempos difíciles
y analizó las ruinas,
pero no fue capaz de apuntalarlas.
Siempre anduvo con ceniza en los hombros.
No develó ni siquiera un misterio.
No fue la primera ni la última figura de un
cuadrivio.
Octavio Paz ya nunca se ocupará de él.
No será ni un ejemplo de los ensayos de Retamar.
Ni Aloma ni Rodríguez Rivera
ni Wichy el pelirrojo
se ocuparán de él.
La Estilística tampoco se ocupará de él.
No hubo nada extralógico en su lengua.
Envejeció de claridad.
Fue más directo que un objeto.¹⁰³

In spite of the overwhelming number of poems which are negative and politically motivated, Padilla ends Fuera del juego with a short piece which lingers quietly as a source of hope; the Cuban poet still allows--even forces--himself to dream. From the wreckage of war and terror, a single metaphor for innocence surfaces: a child's broken kite string which must be mended. In "Vámonos, cuervo," Padilla shows that he has not yet given up:

Vámonos, cuervo

Y ahora
vámonos, cuervo, no a fecundar la cuerva

que ha parido
y llena el mundo de alas negras.
Vámonos a buscar sobre los rascacielos
el hilo roto de la cometa de mis niños
que se enredó en el trípode viejo del
artillero.¹⁰⁴

Padilla moves the reader from negative images of darkness and ugliness ("... cuervo ... cuerva ... / alas negras ...") to lofty ones which run upward toward the light of sky above. Nonetheless, the poet has not left his previous themes behind, but rather uses the war machinery ("el trípode viejo del artillero") as the backdrop on which he paints the central image of "Vámonos, cuervo."

Fuera del juego lashes out and screams at the futility and unfairness of Castro's Cuba. The book explores the manipulated role that poets and artists are being forced to accept. But by his very bitterness, Padilla escapes becoming a mere puppet. In the end, the poet manages to reach for the broken string of his dreams, and in so doing delicately confirms his commitment to create.

CHAPTER IV

EL HOMBRE JUNTO AL MAR:

PADILLA THE REFLECTIVE POET

In the ten years preceding his departure from Cuba, Heberto Padilla continued writing even though he was unable to publish until after he found himself in exile. The result of those ten years of public silence is his last poetic collection to date, El hombre junto al mar.¹⁰⁵ In it, Padilla's voice is a mature and quiet one in which the poet's past and present fuse together creating a work which breathes with love and hope.

The forlorn melancholy so prevalent in El justo tiempo humano, as well as the anger and ugliness of Fuera del juego, are almost totally replaced in El hombre ju... al mar by themes which highlight man's quiet self-confidence and the healing power of fulfilling love. Padilla's history--which echoes throughout--colors and shapes his new work. But the poet also uses his experiences as the backdrop to a series of poems which reflect the value he now gives to the simple life and which reveal his emerging positive attitude toward living.

The collection's title poem, "El hombre junto al mar"--a self-portrait of the poet--reflects Padilla's inner determination and unwillingness to give up even when all hope may have seemed to be lost. This optimism offers intense contrast when compared to the sarcastic and embittered poems such as "Los poetas cubanos ya no sueñan"¹⁰⁶ or "Instrucciones para ingresar en una nueva sociedad"¹⁰⁷ of Fuera del juego. Though in "El hombre junto al mar," the poet depicts a figure lying listlessly by the sea, he refuses to describe him like a drowned man. Instead, and in spite of the waves of misfortune which have so often overpowered the delicate being, Padilla finishes the poem with a strong statement which proclaims life in the midst of tragedy.

El hombre junto al mar

Hay un hombre tirado junto al mar
Pero no pienses que voy a describirlo como a un
 ahogado
Un pobre hombre que se muere en la orilla
Aunque lo hayan arrastrado las olas
Aunque no sea más que una frágil trama que
respira
Unos ojos
Unas manos que buscan
 Certidumbres
 A tientas
Aunque ya no le sirva de nada
Gritar o quedar mudo
Y la ola más débil
Lo pueda destruir y hundir en su elemento
Yo sé que él está vivo
A todo lo ancho y largo de su cuerpo¹⁰⁸

At first the poem seems to present a paradoxical set of images, for while Padilla describes the man as "un hombre tirado junto al mar" the poet immediately warns the reader that he will not describe him as a drowned and dying man. In the following lines, the repeated use of the

word "aunque" lets the reader know that the dejected appearance of the hombre may be deceiving; fragile as the man is, his eyes and hands still "buscan / Certidumbres." In these two lines, at the center of the poem, lies the key to the strength of the message. That beaten and almost defeated man (Padilla) has not yet given up. He is still, however uncertainly, searching for assurance and conviction. He has not yet thrown his hands up in despair and declared that the search for certitude is futile. It is this ability to deal with the attacks of misfortune and fate which preserves his living spirit.

As expressed in the title poem of El hombre junto al mar, many of the collection's pieces focus on aspects which are positive rather than negative. The ugly past sometimes displays itself, but the poet is able to surpass its effects with will power and creative desire. This is a drastic change in perception from that expressed in Fuera del juego, where the poet felt trapped in his own unfulfilling era:

pero está condenado a esta vida y, lo que más le
 aterra,
 fatalmente condenado a su época,
¹⁰⁹

Indeed, starting with the book's first poem, Padilla shows a determination and resolve which mitigate the bitterness which has been experienced. In "Lo mejor es cantar desde ahora," the poet exclaims that for now, the best course is to forget the world of his past. However, in the act of "forgetting," he actually recalls the very past he is bidding good-bye. But the poet does not dwell for long on his "antepasados" and instead turns his focus to the present and future.

In this poem, the closed windows, dark glasses, and solitude found in the earlier books are remembered ("siempre anduve entre las nieblas . . . / . . . mi careta y mi barba. . .")¹¹⁰ but are set aside to make room for dreams which have come true, for cleaning house, and for old ladies laughing in the streets. In all, there is a sense of a new beginning; one in which the poet throws himself to life and to living as stated emphatically in the first five lines of the poem:

Lo mejor es que empiece a cantar
 desde ahora
 la alegría de los sueños cumplidos
 y me olvide del mundo de mis antepasados.
 Ellos a la ceniza. Yo a la vida.
¹¹¹

In spite of this openness and vigor, the past resurfaces and offers contrast, particularly in the last half of the poem. Padilla scoffs at his old ways---perhaps he now recognizes that a man cannot survive if he is constantly at odds with the world around him. In the process, he seems to be coming to terms with errors in his past as he sees his own role (and that of poets in general) as changed:

Siempre anduve entre nieblas como un idiota.
 No pudo ser de otra manera.
 No es posible que en un pecho de hombre
 quepa tanta maldad. . . .

 Entonces el poeta era la plañidera
 que se esforzaba por conmover las multitudes.
¹¹²

No longer driven to "conmover las multitudes," but with eyes still fully open to the reality which exists, the poet can sing to a positive, internal rebirth. In the final lines of the poem, Padilla returns to his theme of exalting life. The simile between the violin and an erect

weapon is appropriate since it evokes both the peaceful image of music and rhythm which the poet now sees in life, as well as the old image of war and death from which he is now turning away:

Y hay que exaltar la vida, sin embargo,
apartar la basura,
y cantar la alegría de los sueños cumplidos,
pero con buena música de fondo;
de violín, si es posible, que es el instrumento
adecuado: agudo, recto como un arma.¹¹³

In spite of the positive change in mood of many poems in El hombre junto al mar, throughout the book there are signs that the healing process has not yet been entirely completed. At times, Padilla still addresses the struggle between what he has been and has occurred and what he now strives to see and become. In "Canción del juglar," the combat between the "general" and the poet is an extended metaphor of the internal conflict Padilla is experiencing. The strife lies between the poetic spirit within Padilla and the still vivid images of military activity with its weapons, trenches, and commanding officers which interfere with creativity. Padilla contrasts these two opposing forces by referring to the battle between his song and the general's noisy orders and by comparing his ragged and tattered attire with the general's fancy military uniforms. The entire scene is carried out with almost theatrical precision ("Un combate lujoso . . . / Un combate teatral. . .") since there has been not a single moment--day or night--in which the combat has subsided. By setting the battle on an imaginary "stage," Padilla creates an illusion which parallels the distancing the poet is beginning to feel from his past struggles. Thus, the poem is effective at both literal and non-literal levels.

In the process of distancing himself from the center of conflict, Padilla finds strength in the fact that his poetry continues to thrive. Towards the end of the poem, the poet recognizes the impenetrability of the general's strength, but finishes his verses with a victorious conviction. In spite of the general's fanfare and power, each night some of the poet's songs remain intact while some of the general's orders die before they can be carried through. Padilla is slowly de-revolutionizing himself and allowing the history within him to express itself poetically rather than politically; little by little and bit-by-bit, the poet and his lyrical work are triumphing:

Canción del juglar

General, hay un combate
entre sus órdenes y mis canciones.
Persiste a todas horas:
noche, día.
No conoce el cansancio ni el sueño.
Un combate que lleva muchos años,
tantos, que mis ojos no han visto nunca un amanecer
en donde no estuvieran usted, sus órdenes, sus
armas, su trinchera.
Un combate lujoso
en donde, esteticamente hablando, se equiparan
mi harapo y su guerrera.
Un combate teatral.
Le haría falta un brillante escenario
donde los comediantes pudieran llegar de todas
partes
haciendo mucho ruido como en las ferias
y exhibiendo cada uno su lealtad y su coraje.
General, yo no puedo destruir sus flotas ni sus
tanques
ni sé que tiempo durará esta guerra;
pero cada noche alguna de sus ordenes muere
sin ser complida
y queda invicta alguna de mis canciones.¹¹⁴

In "Entre marzo y abril está mi mes más cruel," Padilla recalls the time surrounding his incarceration. Even more poignantly than in

"Canción del juglar," in this poem, the negative events which took place in the past resurface and slowly take over the more positive remembrances which are initially invoked. The poem, a voyage through memory, begins with an image of the poet and his wife in tender lovemaking. That simple, peaceful moment would soon be followed by the tense commands and forced separation brought on by the poet's arrest. As the poem progresses, Padilla immerses himself--and the reader--in the harshness of his loss of freedom. By the final lines, the images within the poet's memory are distilled into a prison room where walls, ceiling, bunk bed, and even clothes blend together in a dull, nondescript shade of dirt. The reader has travelled in a journey that passes from the present to the past in an ever-worsening flashback. It becomes evident that the embers of the trauma he experienced are still smoldering within the poet's mind and soul.

From both the title and first line of the poem--an allusion to T. S. Eliot's famous verse, "April is the cruelest month of all . . ."115--the reader is aware of Padilla's reference to the period when he was jailed (from March 20 to April 27, 1971). After this allusion, however, the poet immediately, though temporarily, re-focuses on the tenderness experienced with his wife:

Entre marzo y abril está mi mes más cruel
 Entre marzo y abril está mi mes más cruel
 Apretado a tus brazos
 ascua feliz
 el más tierno y salvaje
 te dije:
 estos tienen que ser los brazos del amor
 Puse tus ojos y tus labios abiertos
 debajo de los míos

y caímos cantando en el sofá¹¹⁶

The flow of romantic memories, however, is momentarily interrupted by the poet's qualifying statement which follows in the next lines: from that moment on, lovemaking would no longer be so peaceful. Intimate moments would be affected by either harsh reality or the internal fears of the couple:

fue la última vez en que pudimos amar
sin sobresaltos. 117
.....

With those words, the poet returns to the vivid description of his passion. The verses, filled with sensual and sexual images, express the deep emotion being recalled and the awareness that a child is growing within his wife's womb:

y en vez de libros
 flores
y un hechizo calcáreo en la pared
 con manchas
y la espuma de los muebles de mimbre
 orlando tu aureola
abriendo abanicos de fuego
lanzallamas
y un cielo
y una constelación que se agigantan
muslos y vulvas inmortales
y mi oído en tu vientre
 donde te late un nuevo corazón
y en tu entraña
 ahora estás embarazada
en la abertura exigua de cada poro
el eterno deseo
la única escritura digna de nuestros nombres
y el retrato de Marx
junto al de nuestros padres
 implorando
que arranquemos del mundo la tristeza
.....118

Even though the emotion being expressed is indeed powerful, there is a growing tension, like a shout waiting to burst out, which keeps the poem from being merely a lyrical statement of love. All is not calm. Even the detail of Marx's portrait amidst those of family members implores the couple to weed sadness from the world. The two respond, but their motions seem brusque, abrupt, ("nos alzamos / nos vestimos / le arrancamos . . .") like actors following a hurried script before their time runs out:

Nos alzamos
 nos vestimos
 le arrancamos al mundo la tristeza
 sonreímos
 te sentaste a mi lado
 me miraste
 119

In the next lines, the paradox between the poet's own self-perception ("Yo / el escueto y lógico . . .") and the almost surreal words he speaks or shouts adds to the intensity of the moment; there is a struggle underway where inner and outer forces are battling and tension results:

y yo
 el escueto y logico
 te grite
 fuego mío, brunido por la vida
 laurel invulnerable
 tacto
 jadeo
 gozo
 Algo de eso te dije o te grite
 con el horror de que pudieran acabarse
 de pronto las palabras
 120

As the poet continues, it becomes more and more evident that the urgency of those bygone times pervaded and affected even the most

private moments. When his wife finally falls asleep, the poet notices that she feels safe--"protegida / confiada"--and leaves implied that at other times these restful sentiments are not felt. Out of concern, he holds back from falling asleep himself so that his uneasy breathing will not disturb his lover's brief repose:

Y continuá**á**bamos desnudos
 cuerpos
 debajo de un pantalón
 de un vestido le lana
 todo temblor
 desnudos
Nadie que no seas tú
 podría plegarse a la modulación urgente de
 mis días
 te dije
 en realidad queria susurrarte mis años
 pero eso te alegró
 y te dormiste
 protegida
 confiada
 los libros
 y la ropa
 por el suelo
Cuando duermes parece que te ahogas o sufres
Me das miedo
 Ese era yo
 tú describiendome
 asustada con mi respiración
 De modo que esperé a que durmieras
 mucho rato
 para que nada pudiera despertarte
 nunca nada ni nadie
¹²¹

From this point on, however, the scene begins to change as the poet moves further away from the memory of his wife and the tender caresses they exchanged to images of the violence which interrupted their privacy and ultimately brought him to a prison cell. Thus far, the poet has depicted one aspect--"una cara"--of the world, and next the reader will witness another quite different; one filled with hurried

marches and orders at unforeseen hours of the day and night. Now clothes are shed, not for the intimacies of lovers, but to be replaced by the nondescript attire of the jail-house. Instead of passionate words, commanding voices and screams of pain are heard as the metal prison doors slam open and shut. As he did in Fuera del juego, the poet's descriptions shed light on a darker and more cruel facet of his world, specifically that which lives for him in the period between March and April:

Animales del siglo
 enlazados desnudos
y el mundo entre los dos
 ¿o una cara del mundo?
 ¿Pero cuál?
Luego fueron zapatos burdos
 apresurados
no en la yerba
 en el suelo
 en la penumbra
 en el amanecer
yo vistiéndome adormilado
oyendo
 no tu respiración
 sino la orden
la más humana
 desvistiéndome luego en otro sitio
 audible de las voces
vuelto a vestir
 con una tela del color de la tierra
un efecto sencillo en una sinfonía
 Adelante camina
la más humana
 de las voces
Golpetazos
aullidos
Yo subiendo
 bajando escaleras
 del color de la tela
Puertas
 abriéndose
 cerrándose
entre marzo y abril
 un golpe de metal sobre metal

una cara del mundo.
 ¿Pero cuál?
 Un mes oculto entre otros dos
 ¿del más cruel? ¿del más fiel?
¹²²

By the last eight lines of the poem, there remains no trace of the passionate lovemaking that appeared in the first part of the work. The final image of a dull and desolate prison cell contrasts sharply with the earlier description of the lovers' room. The hot colors which filled the memory of the poet as he recalled the moment of lovemaking ("flores . . . / abanicos de fuego / lanzallamas . . .") are now replaced by scratched walls and meager furnishings "color tierra":

Y la pared garabateada a punta de cucharas
 nombres
 fechas
 despedidas
 pedazos de oraciones
 La litera es también color tierra como la tela
 El techo y la letrina son también muy oscuros
 del color de la tela.¹²³

Thus, in "Entre marzo y abril está mi mes más cruel," Padilla blends both the positive images of his wife and their lovemaking with the negative memory of his arrest and time spend in prison. In so doing, the poet demonstrates the difficulty of carrying out his own advice to sing, ("Lo mejor es cantar desde ahora,") and displays how vulnerable he still is to the recollections of "tiempos difíciles" which even now attack his emotional and psychological well-being.

"Autorretrato del otro" details, similarly, the opposing forces which still--at least occasionally--play tug-of-war within the poet. In this poem, Padilla holds an internal monologue with himself in which he recalls the past as he reacts to the new pressures of the present. In

the first segment of the poem, Padilla poses a question which sets the tone for the rest of the work. He does not answer himself, but rather shifts to a scene from yesteryears and recalls the impetuous nature of his youth:

Autorretrato del otro

¿Son estremecimientos, nauseas,
efusiones,
o más bien esas ganas
que a veces tiene el hombre de gritar?
No lo sé. Vuelvo a escena.
Camino hacia los reflectores
como ayer,
 más veloz que una ardilla,
con mi baba de niño
y una banda tricolor en el pecho,
 protestón e irascible
 entre los colegiales.
.....124

As he returns in his mind to days when he marched for the flag ("una banda tricolor en el pecho"), the poet recalls those times when he fought for the cause of his country and protested among his peers. Yet he sees that stage of his life as infantile ("con mi baba de niño . . . / protestón e irascible . . .") and as a time, perhaps, of youthful rebelliousness. It is impossible for the reader not to associate this period of protest with Fuera del juego.

In the mid section of the poem, however, Padilla also seems to struggle with the situation in which he finds himself presently. Though he mocks the memory of his rebellious youth, he also rejects the sterile environment ("jardín barroco") in which he has been placed; neither alternative seems a satisfactory one. The tiny statue which he keeps at his desk perhaps serves as a constant reminder that the urge to fight is

still within the poet. The bronze gladiator thus becomes a tangible symbol of Padilla's alter ego; he may have stopped actively revolting, but the calling is still within him. In the last lines of this segment, Padilla exclaims that he will depart the odious "jardín barroco" when his troupe of minstrels appears; once again, his muse and lyricism will rescue him, and he will return to poetic creation:

Es que por fin
 lograron encerrarme
 en el jardín barroco que tanto odie
 y este brillo de ópalo
 en los ojos
 me hace irreconocible.
 El gladiador enano (de bronce)
 que he puesto encima de la mesa
 --un héroe cejijunto y habilísimo
 con su arma corta y blanca--
 y su perra enconada,
 son ahora mis únicos compinches.
 Pero cuando aparezca
 mi tropa de juglares
 limaremos las rejas
 y saldré.
 ¡Puertas son las que sobran!
 125

In the first 17 lines of the poem's last section, Padilla allows his flow of consciousness to explore the possibilities surrounding his present situation. He asks rhetorical questions which shed light on the conflict with which he now struggles. He is caught in the middle of opposing forces ("Las Derechas . . . / Las Izquierdas . . .") and wonders if he is still in control of his own destiny ("¿Es una pesadilla / que yo mismo pudiera destruir?"):

Bajo la luna plástica
 ¿me he vuelto un papagayo
 o un payaso de náilon
 que enreda y trueca las consignas?
 ¿O no es cierto?

¿Es una pesadilla
 que yo mismo pudiera destruir?
 Abrir
 de repente los ojos
 y rodar por el sueño como un tonel
 y el mundo ya mezclado con mis fermentaciones?
 ¿O serán estas ganas
 que a veces tiene el hombre de gritar?
 Las Derechas me alaban
 (ya me difamarán).
 Las Izquierdas me han hecho célebre
 (¿no han empezado a alimentar sus
 dudas?).
126

Confused about his own role as a poet and about his seemingly compromised principals, Padilla does not reach an acceptable conclusion until the last nine lines of the poem. Here, at last, he attempts to cast aside the external pressures that he feels and recognizes that he would like to be in control of--at the very least--himself. In spite of all about which he doubts and worries, he can at least walk in the streets without hiding and without having to spy. In the final verses, Padilla longs to forget about that which is political in order to make room for inner peace. When he pleads, "Abranme paso ya / sin saludarme, por favor. / Sin hablarme. / Echense a un lado si me ven" he is speaking as much to himself as to the outside forces which are imposing their will on him. He wants to be claimed by neither the Right or the Left as a hero; but rather, he longs to be independent and to survive--gladiator-like--by his own skills:

Pero de todas formas
 advierto que vivo entre las calles.
 Voy sin gafas ahumadas.
 Y no llevo bombas de tiempo en los bolsillos
 ni una oreja peluda --de oso--.
 Abranme paso ya
 sin saludarme, por favor.

Sin hablarme.
Echense a un lado si me ven.¹²⁷

Padilla's retrospective sensitivity enables him now to surpass the specific historical tragedy and to distance himself from it. By so doing, he allows his creativity to overcome the socio-political commentary so prevalent in Fuera del juego without closing his eyes to the reality of his own experiences. In fact, throughout El hombre junto al mar, Padilla both recognizes and uses the past to contrast with the present and in so doing moves further and further away from angry commentary to find hope and confidence in the future.

In "En verano" Padilla first describes the fertility and beauty of the summer season. The images are positive, full of sun, open doors, and poetic possibilities, yet even in the midst of such plenitude, the poet does not forget his past. In the middle of the poem, it reappears:

Es cuando a plena luz
Se aparecen mis múltiples antepasados
Que vienen a instalarse en torno a mí
Como reproducciones hechas del natural.¹²⁸
.....

Here, however, the poet's "antepasados" are welcomed; they are an inextricable part of the creative process, like an old friend who comfortably visits without needing an invitation. Thus, the reader is aware that Padilla is changing and maturing. The poet now begins to recognize that, terrible or not, his very past is the history which forms him and from which he can pull to create poems:

En verano

En verano
El sol entra por las puertas abiertas
El flamboyán mugriento

Sin color
 Corre a mis manos
 Y yo le tiño el verde
 El arrebol
 Y lo circundo del mejor diseño
 Es cuando a plena luz
 Se aparecen mis múltiples antepasados
 Que vienen a instalarse en torno a mí
 Como reproducciones hechas del natural.
 Son los que velan mi sueño en la cama de roble
 Los que tienen la sencilla costumbre
 De despertarme a la primera luz del alba
 Los que funden las turbinas hostiles
 Los que logran mantenernos de pie
 Los partidarios de la poesía.¹²⁹

In fact, in the final lines of the short poem, Padilla gives credit to his "múltiples antepasados" for succeeding in keeping him--and all "partidarios de la poesía"--alert and on their feet. These same "antepasados"--his personal memory as well as that of the poets that came before him--protect Padilla from both the internal and external machinery ("las turbinas hostiles") which threaten his creativity and peace.

The theme initiated in the book's first poem is expanded in "El que regresa a las regiones claras." In this poem, Padilla again dismisses the "casas brumosas" of his past and with them the dark and bitter memories which so enveloped his earlier work. That past remains behind certain closed windows, while now, as in "En verano," the sun is allowed in, and its brightness and warmth have healed him. Indeed, the reader will note that open windows and doors, the sun, freshness, green, and fertility are motifs which will reappear throughout the entire poem:

Ya dije adiós a las casas brumosas . . .

 . . . las ventanas que desde ayer
 están cerradas.

Porque el sol me ha curado.

 Un nuevo día entra por la ventana
 --estallante, de trópico--.

 encerrados en esta luz de acuario:

 que ya ha curado el sol,
 130

While the sun filters through both open windows and into the once darker regions in the mind of the poet, another positive element surfaces in Padilla's poetry: love and woman have become integral parts of the poet's new existence. No longer a mere stranger or a one-night stand, the woman now is a meaningful and sincere mate. Her presence is more intense than that of any other has been, more real than any travels to exotic lands:

No vivo del recuerdo de ninguna mujer,
 ni hay países que puedan vivir en mi memoria
 con más intensidad que este cuerpo que reposa a mi
 lado.
 131

The poet has found a safe haven and resting place from which he can clearly see both the past and the present. His home and his love fully replace the nightmares and melancholy from which he once suffered. In fact, at the end of the poem, Padilla sees himself as a once-ailing man who is now in good health. The "old" self was the result of a sickness, a spiritual illness fortunately transitory. The image of the poet wrapped in scarves and dark overcoats, always scurrying and observing in rain and cold obscurity is now a fading reflection "que ya ha curado el sol, / el último síntoma de aquella enfermedad, /

afortunadamente transitoria." Love--fulfilling and giving--has replaced the battles and the anger found in the earlier books.

Belkis Cuza Malé, the poet's wife and to whom El hombre junto al mar is dedicated, features prominently throughout the collection of poems. In this book, she either is or represents love and its fulfillment. In many ways, the poet gathers strength from her constant and dependable presence in his life. She and his love for her fill the melancholic loneliness expressed in El justo tiempo humano and the angry void existing in the poet's soul throughout Fuera del juego. In "Amándonos," Belkis and her love clearly supersede the causes and concerns for which the poet so often struggled in the past. Even "las cosas menudas que no proclaman / ni sustentan nada . . ."132 carry his lover's name. Specifically, in the last two lines of the poem, the poet expresses as much loyalty to her as to his own country as her warm body metaphorically becomes his flag:

Así es como lo tibio de tu cuerpo es mi bandera
es mi bandera es mi bandera¹³³

In the unquestionably romantic love poem, "Que siempre exista tu cabeza," Padilla expresses his hope that Belkis will always be with him:

Que siempre exista tu cabeza
Que siempre exista tu cabeza
Una ciudad soltando pájaros a poca altura de la mía
bodas
en fin
gaviotas en la espuma
Que haya un tonel de vino negro
como tus ojos
y naves altas y limpias
como la noche

Y tú en medio de todo
juntando lo inconexo.¹³⁴

In Padilla's description of his wife and how she makes him feel, the poet's love is evident; his images ("... pájaros / bodas ... / gaviotas ... / vino ... / naves altas y limpias ...") are full of life, beauty, and peace. Even the night, which in previous books often brought fear, empty memories, and fruitless encounters with others, is now compared to "naves altas y limpias." The final two lines of the poem summarize his need for Belkis and her calming presence. It is with her that the inconsistencies and conflicts of the world begin to make sense, and through her, he is able to see a life filled with wonders and possibilities:

Y tú en medio de todo
juntando lo inconexo.¹³⁵

Padilla often describes Belkis as his savior, as the force responsible for pulling him out of the depth of depression and cynical bitterness. She is his bouquet of freshly cut flowers, his flight of birds singing in their path, his motion and activity in the midst of laziness, sloth, boredom. As such, she represents much more than a wife might portray: she is the impetus that brings and gives him life; the balance he so desperately lacked and sought throughout his unhappy childhood and impetuous youth. In "Canción de aniversario" these sentiments are prevalent:

Canción de aniversario

Con una maletica de mimbre entre las manos,
ansiosa, conmovida, adolescente aún,
yo te encontré mirando con terror
la rosa inútil de los vientos.

Yo te encontré buscando amor.
 Te encontré a la deriva.
 Nos agarramos.
 Me fuiste diluyendo en la juventud.
 Me hiciste el enemigo de la pereza y de los
 sarcasmos.
 Me enamoraste del sortilegio de tus aleluyas.
 Y hemos intercambiado
 todo cuanto teníamos:

 fragmentos que buscaban la unidad de un diseño
 grande como tus ojos,
 bello como tus ojos.¹³⁶

In this poem, Padilla first speaks of his initial encounter with Belkis. The first six lines of the work describe her as someone who was once apparently as needy as the poet himself was. She was "ansiosa, conmovida, adolescente," and in search of love. Indeed, Padilla's words would appropriately mirror his own sense of displacement; he, too, was often found "a la deriva." Like two magnets attracted to each other with the same intensity of need, the couple clung together. Padilla's use of the strong verb agarrarse in the line, "Nos agarramos" is particularly effective. Rather than using a less aggressive verb such as "nos abrazamos" or even "nos unimos," the poet chose a verb replete with desperation; they reached for each other and held on as though it were a matter of life or death. Were a man drowning, he would cling to a floating branch with equal intensity. The last half of "Canción de aniversario" eulogizes the changes Belkis caused in the poet's life:

Me fuiste diluyendo en la juventud.
 Me hiciste el enemigo de la pereza y de los
 sarcasmos.
 Me enamoraste del sortilegio de tus aleluyas.¹³⁷

Belkis was the rejuvenating breath which brought the broken pieces of his life into one whole. The final lines of the poem speak specifically to this phenomenon much as the last two lines of "Que siempre exista tu cabeza" proclaim that she was able to put together "lo inconexo." The couple lived within "fragmentos que buscaban la unidad de un diseño" but with this line, the poet alludes to an analogy that is both powerful and effective. While Padilla and Belkis sought to piece together a world they did not understand and in which they seemingly did not fit, they, too, were broken fragments in need of the unity and cohesion they ultimately found in each other. Thus, the final lines of the poem hold a double meaning which attest to the couple's view of a discordant external world and the incongruous pieces of their own lives:

Y hemos intercambiado
todo cuanto teníamos:
fragmentos que buscaban la unidad de un diseño
grande como tus ojos,
bello como tus ojos.¹³⁸

Both "La vida contigo" and "A Belkis, cuando pinta" sing to the positive power of Belkis's steady and constant presence in Padilla's life. Once again, she embodies the cautious yet assured fluidity which are the antithesis to Padilla's insecure and awkward nature. He recognizes the value and necessity of her soft, calming attitude. Even though by comparison to her graceful motion he at times finds himself clumsy and unsure, her deliberate manner gives him confidence and balance. In the first nine lines of "La vida contigo," Padilla uses no less than five verbs which denote cautious and slow movements: "Te levantas / y el día se levanta . . . / se levanta todo . . . / te

mueves . . . todo viene hacia ti . . ." Towards the end of the poem, Belkis is depicted as lightly flowing--"muslos que fluyen . . . / o aire tal vez . . ."--and almost ethereal in her demeanor. She has become the symbol for the spiritual whole which has united the fragmented parts of Padilla's existence.

La vida contigo

Te levantas
y el día se levanta contigo
Se levanta todo lo que quedó
lo que salvó la noche
Y te mueves a tientas
parece que te unieras al mundo con cautela
como si hubiese que reaprenderlo todo
Y sin embargo
todo viene hacia ti
soy yo el que forcejea
el que pierde pie
el que cae al fondo
buscándote
No sé si eres la misma
que hace solo un instante ha dormido conmigo
o esa que nunca duerme:
muslos que fluyen
ojos que se apresuran
o aire tal vez
la masa transparente
la gran fiesta del pájaro.¹³⁹

In "A Belkis, cuando pinta," the poet again observes his wife as she paints and in turn frees his imagination to paint her as he, himself, sees her in his mind's eye. The entire poem is itself a carefully crafted canvas on which the poet splashes colorful paint made up of words and images which parallel his wife's artistry. Padilla first presents a verbal snapshot of Belkis as she paints. The reader actually "sees" her standing, head inclined, murmuring words to herself and to her vivid colors:

A Belkis cuando pinta

Cuando pinta inclina la cabeza
siempre hacia el mismo lado
para que los colores alcancen --dice ella--
las texturas mas alegres y fieles,
.....140

From this simple, objective introduction, however, the poet allows himself to play with his vision and transfigure it lovingly. The images which follow are filled with reds ("enrojezco . . . / quemadura . . . / llamas . . .") and the warm colors of autumn and passion:

Pero no sabe que yo la observo y la transfiguro.
Su pelo es largo y lacio y yo lo trenzo a mi
manera,
es negro y lo enrojezco hasta que arda como una
quemadura,
y alzo sus manos del dibujo
y hago que participen de las llamas.
.....141

The remainder of the poem is filled with quickly changing impressions of Belkis in a variety of different settings. Here again, Padilla "paints" with words as the poem places her "por todas partes," each scene filled with joyful colors ("playa amarilla . . . / buscando la magnolia . . . / en verde, en rojo, en malva . . . / negra ardiendo . . . / coralina") and exuding with life:

Me gusta imaginarla en todas partes,
ubicua y fantasmal
para que ocupe todo el mapa convulso de mis poemas.
Por ejemplo:
vestida con un suéter de Cachemira.
Por ejemplo:
desnuda al borde de una playa amarilla
como el telar crujiente de Van Gogh.
Por ejemplo:
en canoa, buscando la magnolia de
Isolda

para las fiestas de nuestra boda.

Por ejemplo:

cantando

ella y la soledad

ella y la araña del techo, ella y el cortinaje

florido de su pelo;

alegre y despeinada

como una reina ociosa, en verde, en rojo, en malva

junto a mi, en su rincón oscuro de palmista,

con mi mano en su mano,

descifrando acertijos de bronce contra los

malhechores.

Ella por todas partes

con su cabeza negra ardiendo entre los humos

en la punta de mi pipa de coralina.¹⁴²

The love poems in El hombre junto al mar thus cover a wide range of emotions, from the abandon of lovers who have recently found each other, to the ever-deepening feelings which grow from sharing a life and history together. As the years pass, Padilla can look back on the events which brought him and Belkis closer to one another. Belkis is indeed "por todas partes" of his life and unifies his poetic creation; she occupies "todo el mapa convulso de [sus] poemas."¹⁴³ She, at long last, is able to satisfy his need for both physical and spiritual love, a need which had grown in him unabated throughout the earlier works. Nonetheless, his happy memories, colored with the brightness and freshness of summer, continue to coexist side by side with memories of difficult times filled with anxiety and fear. The difference in Padilla's work now, however, is that these hardships no longer make up the central theme of his poems. Rather, they are treated as part of his life and reality all combining to forge a unified history from which he now both distances himself and creates.

"La promesa" clearly discusses how the poet, far enough from the immediacy of past times, is now able to write a long-promised poem for his wife. Padilla recognizes that before, he was too engrossed in his own history to be able to separate himself enough to free his creative spirit. Only now, not by ignoring the difficulties experienced, but by remembering them in their perspective, does he realize the role of "la Historia" and weave it into his poetry:

La promesa

Hace tiempo te había prometido muchos
poemas de amor y --ya ves-- no podía escribirlos.
Tú estabas junto a mí
y es imposible escribir sobre lo que se tiene.
Lo que se tiene siempre es poesía.
Pero ya han comenzado a unirnos cosas
definitivas: hemos vivido la misma soledad
en cuartos separados
--sin saber nada el uno del otro--,
tratando --cada uno en su sitio-- de recordar
como eran los gestos de nuestras caras
que de pronto se juntan con aquellas
que ya creíamos perdidas, desdibujadas,
de los primeros años.
Yo recordaba los golpes en la puerta
y tu voz alarmada
y tú mis ojos neutros,
soñolientos aún.
Durante mucho tiempo me preguntabas
que cosa era la Historia.
Yo fracasaba, te daba definiciones
imprecisas.
Nunca me atreví a darte un ejemplo mayor.¹⁴⁴

Padilla, in this way, answers Belkis's question: History is what he carries within him, the assimilation and internalization of all that is experienced. The poet is now able to write because, even if unintentionally, everything that has happened to him affects his poetic creation. Padilla writes about his past--pleasant or not--because it

has become a part of his own life. Herein lies the quiet strength of El hombre junto al mar, for while the poet has not closed his eyes to the rigors and sadness characteristic in both Fuera del juego and El justo tiempo humano, he is able to persevere and carry on. In fact, in the final line of the last poem of the collection, "El regalo," the poet cries out his plea, "¡oh Dios, danos la fuerza para proseguir!"

As in "La promesa," in "El regalo" Padilla fuses the beauty of a joyful moment in which he buys strawberries for his wife with the memory of "años / luchando con vientos acres, / como sopladados de las ruinas; . . ." Instead of despairing, however, he finds the flower in the midst of the ruins and acknowledges his own "Resurrección:"

El regalo

He comprado estas fresas para ti.
Pensé traerte flores,
pero vi a una muchacha que mordía
fresas en plena calle,
y el jugo espeso y dulce
corría por sus labios de tal modo
que sentí que su ardor y avidez
eran como los tuyos,
imagen misma del amor.

Hemos vivido años
luchando con vientos acres,
como sopladados de las ruinas;
mas siempre hubo una fruta,
la más sencilla,
y hubo siempre una flor.
De modo que aunque no sean
lo más importante del universo,
yo sé que aumentarán el tamaño de tu alegría
lo mismo que la fiesta de esa nieve que cae.
Nuestro hijo la disuelve sonriente entre los dedos
como debe hacer Dios con nuestras vidas.
Nos hemos puesto abrigos y botas,
y nuestras pieles rojas y ateridas
son otra imagen de la Resurrección.

Criaturas de las diásporas de nuestro tiempo,
¡oh Dios, danos la fuerza para proseguir!

Padilla recognizes that inner strength lies not in the ability or willingness to constantly rebel against that which is anathema, but rather in man's inexplicable capability to face the adversities of life and continue living. He has fought many battles and now desires the strength to "proseguir." Evidently, by now he feels entitled to a degree of peace and comfort, and longs for those quiet moments of beauty he had for so long been too obsessed to fully see. Indeed, throughout many of the poems, there is an overwhelming sense that Padilla desires respite and has come to terms with his old restless spirit. Perhaps it has been a function of time and maturity, but the poet no longer feels the burning need to fight, and instead looks philosophically upon his distant travels and turmoil.

In "Canción del hijo pródigo," Padilla longs to enjoy again the simple pleasures that his stubborn eyes once did not notice. Like the Biblical Prodigal Son who returns to his father's welcoming arms and fattened calf, Padilla wants the joys of the sun, trees, and ocean to be offered to him once again. It is important to note that in this poem--as in the last line of "El regalo"--the poet is not too proud or stubborn to ask for that which he desires. The poem signals the continual evolution of the poet as he allows himself to seek refuge and peace instead of conflict and confrontation:

Canción del hijo pródigo
Devuélveme el escándalo del sol
la puerta del colegio

Que arda al fin el verano
para mis ojos tercos

Anduve tanto
que ardor y nieve
asolan mi ojo de viajero
Mójenme ya los labios
con mi esponja de niño
Devuélvanme el crujido
de los árboles verdes
y el noble mar de siempre.¹⁴⁶

In the development of his poems, Padilla recognizes and praises the value of man's humanity--inconsistent and weak though it might be--and of the individual's steadfast commitment to carry on even in the face of seemingly irrefutable odds. A dominant theme throughout these poems in El hombre junto al mar is that, in spite of the angst so often experienced, man--and Padilla--can still dream, can still persevere. Such is the conclusion in the short poem, "La voz." Here, as clearly as the music being strummed on the guitar, the poet affirms the power of man and his human, caring voice to bring forth joy and dissipate fear:

La voz

No es la guitarra lo que alegra
o ahuyenta el miedo en la medianoche
No es su bordón redondo y manso
como el ojo de un buey
No es la mano que roza o se aferra a las cuerdas
buscando los sonidos
sino la voz humana cuando canta
y propaga los ensueños del hombre.¹⁴⁷

After the agony and bitterness which Padilla, himself, experienced, it is possible to see that the faith of the "hombre junto al mar" mirrors the new outlook on life the poet has adopted. It is no longer necessary for Padilla to polarize life into distinct categories labeled "good" or "bad." He seems to be concluding that life is made up

of both, and when both are recognized and accepted instead of continually fought, maturity and inner strength are the results. In El hombre junto al mar, Padilla begins to function more as a creative observer and recorder than as political or social critic. As a consequence, his poetry obtains a harmony which reflects the poet's new philosophical stance. Indeed, in the opening lines of "En los poemas," Padilla explicitly confirms that his values have changed. No longer will he focus on themes that ignore his vision of the common life. He then proceeds to depict the details of a simple scene with a house, path, and feasting butterfly amidst the woods of Virginia:

En los poemas

En los poemas que el poeta abre y cierra como si
construyera una trampa,
no solo cabe la cuerda del suicida,
la confesión de amor, la clásica seriedad de los
lamentos,
la exaltación de la más alta flor en el más alto y
hasta
perfecto tallo.
Hay también un paisaje, casi tallado al sol:
el de los bosques de Virginia.
Una mujer y un niño están al borde de un camino
(todo ocurre en verano),
la casa, detrás, es de ladrillo color rojo
quemado,
leña seca en la puerta,
ningún mar a la vista,
ningún oso, sino la ardilla que observa la ventana
como un predicador,
la mariposa apretada a la flor,
desde luego,
chupándola.¹⁴⁸

Love, tragedy, every-day happenings, beauty, death, and hope are the elements which fill Padilla's poetic work as well as the components to a fully-lived life. Padilla seems sharply aware of this reality, and

because he is able to find his poetic balance, his poetry reflects the values of a more positive and accepting attitude toward life. As he exclaims, each day brings new possibilities and is in itself possible again:

Y al vover la cabeza para mirar
descubres que aún es posible el día . . .¹⁴⁹

In the process of confirming his change in values, Padilla's "poética" also evolves. His poem, "La fórmula" is a statement of his aesthetics and supports the theme of balance and moderation so prevalent in his new outlook. In the initial images of this poem, Padilla acknowledges that the world and reality look different when viewed from different perspectives. For this purpose, the poet juxtaposes two extremes: an illuminated, sun-filled mountain summit and the dark, abysmal caves of Plato's Dialogues:

La fórmula

No es lo mismo
mirar el mundo desde una cumbre iluminada
que desde la caverna de Platón
donde un solo relente de claridad
humedece los bordes insondables y oscuros,
.....¹⁵⁰

In the rest of the poem, Padilla quotes his friend, Joseito, and the extremes of the first five lines give way to balance and reason. Joseito, 89 years old, offers Padilla his secret for long life and health: moderation in everything. Padilla's past history has been full of excess, but the poet is now willing and able to accept a degree of equilibrium and harmony into his life:

Pero mi amigo Joseito
--que es un hombre nutrido unicamente

de yerbas y tubérculos--
 me propone su fórmula a los ochenta y nueve años:
 mirar desde un pozo que no sea demasiado profundo,
 desde una llanura que no sea demasiado dilatada,
 desde una montaña que no sea demasiado alta.
 Y ésto --me dice sonriente, y con la voz
 (eso sí) enronquecida por los excesos de mi
 sombra.¹⁵¹

Padilla, now fully aware that the many and varied facets of life work together to make a whole, no longer separates life into fragments. He embraces the positive and the negative with equal vigor and accepts the bitter with the sweet. In the first ten lines of "Con solo abrir los ojos," Padilla contrasts a series of positive images ("gajo de Aroma . . . flor amarilla . . . / palma") with their antithesis. His purpose, however, is not that of the cynic who finds a negative side to every issue, but rather to proclaim the balance he finds in nature and in his life. In the following lines of the poem, Padilla confirms and accepts the incongruities of the world in which he lives:

Con solo abrir los ojos

Este jardín,
 plantado a unos metros del río,
 le dió cobija, bajo el viento de lluvia,
 a esta lechuza enferma,
 arrastrada en el fango como un saboteador.
 Y ese gajo de Aroma, con la flor amarilla
 y la espina oculta, le desgarró la ubre
 a la vaca vieja,
 y la palma, partida por el rayo,
 negrea río abajo en la corriente.
 Así teje la vida sus coronas de laurel y
 hojalata,
 arqueada como una costurera sobre la realidad,
 uniendo sus retazos oscuros y brillantes.
 De esta manera --no de otra--
 se hacen las catedrales y las bodas:
 con sangre de tísicos y con sangre de desposadas.
 Con solo abrir los ojos

descubres que existe una belleza abominable
hasta en el paisaje.¹⁵²

The poetic collection, El hombre junto al mar, breaks the mold of Padilla's earlier works in its lyrical, philosophical, and aesthetic content. The book is neither "un acta de acusación ni un documento político,"¹⁵³ but a compilation of verses which echoes the pain experienced by the poet while simultaneously reflecting on the value of life and love.

Heberto Padilla's view of his personal history, so graphically depicted in the forlorn El justo tiempo humano and the embittered Fuera del juego, is transformed in the poetic collection, El hombre junto al mar. In these poems, the poet's perception moves away from being self-centered and inwardly focused; it has evolved into an expansive vision which blends together the incongruities, joys, and concerns of humanity into a unified whole. The simple yet powerful verses of El hombre junto al mar, inspired by man's internal faith, determination, and creative spirit, give homage to both humanity's perseverance and the poet's own ability to create.

FOOTNOTES

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²Fayad Jamís, "Por esta libertad," In La poesía de Fayad Jamís, ed. Arturo Molina García (La Habana, Cuba: Ediciones Casa de las Américas, 1962), p. 14.

³Carlos Ripoll, The Cuban Scene: Censors & Dissenters (Washington D.C.: Cuban American National Foundation, 1982), p. 4.

⁴Heberto Padilla, El justo tiempo humano (Puerto Rico: Editorial San Juan, 1962).

⁵Heberto Padilla, "Como un animal," in El justo tiempo humano (Puerto Rico: Editorial San Juan, 1962), pp. 68-69.

⁶Ripoll, The Cuban Scene: Censors & Dissenters, p. 4.

⁷Lourdes Casal, ed., El caso Padilla: Literatura y Revolución en Cuba (New York: Ediciones Nueva Atlantida, n.d.), p. 36.

⁸Ibid., p. 107

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¹⁰Casal, El caso Padilla: Literatura y Revolución en Cuba, p. 37.

¹¹Heberto Padilla, Fuera del juego (Barcelona, Spain: El Bardo, 1970).

¹²Heberto Padilla, "Los poetas cubanos ya no sueñan," in Fuera del juego (Barcelona, Spain: El Bardo, 1970), p. 16.

¹³Casal, El caso Padilla: Literatura y Revolución en Cuba, p. 62.

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- ¹⁶Heberto Padilla, Provocaciones (poemas) (Madrid: Ediciones la gota de agua, 1973).
- ¹⁷Heberto Padilla, "A Galileo" in Provocaciones (poemas) Madrid: Ediciones la gota de agua, 1973), p. 41.
- ¹⁸Heberto Padilla, El hombre junto al mar (Barcelona, Spain: Editorial Seix Barral, S.A., 1981), jacket.
- ¹⁹Casal, El caso Padilla: Literatura y Revolución en Cuba, p. 76.
- ²⁰Ibid., p. 74.
- ²¹Ibid., pp. 78-104.
- ²²Ibid., p. 123
- ²³Heberto Padilla, El hombre junto al mar (Barcelona, Spain: Editorial Seix Barral, S.A., 1981).
- ²⁴Heberto Padilla, "Lo mejor es cantar desde ahora," in El hombre junto al mar (Barcelona, Spain: Editorial Seix Barral, S.A. 1981), pp. 7-8.
- ²⁵Padilla, El justo tiempo humano, (Puerto Rico: Editioal San Juan, 1962).
- ²⁶José Mario, Introduction to Provocaciones (poemas) by Heberto Padilla (Madrid: Ediciones la gota de agua, 1973), p. 15.
- ²⁷Orlando Gómez-Gil, ed., Footnote to Cantos de vida y esperanza by Ruben Dario in Literatura hispanoamericana, antología crítica; Tomo II: Desde el Modernismo hasta el presente (New York: Holt Rinehart Winston, 1971), p. 99.
- ²⁸Heberto Padilla, "Dones," in El justo tiempo humano, Part I, stanzas 1-2, lines 1-23, p. 15.
- ²⁹T. S. Eliot, "The Waste Land: I. The Burial of the Dead," in Collected Poems 1909-1962 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1963, stanza 1, lines 1-4, stanza 2, lines 19-20, p. 53.
- ³⁰Rubén Darío, "Yo soy aquel. . .," Cantos de vida y esperanza, (1905), in Literatura hispanoamericana, antología crítica; Tomo II: Desde el Modernismo hasta el presente, ed. Orlando Gómez-Gil , stanza 4, lines 13-16, p. 99.

³¹Padilla, "Dones," in El justo tiempo humano, Part I, stanza 3, lines 18-19, p. 16.

³²Ibid., stanzas 4-5, lines 24-33, p. 16.

³³Ibid., stanzas 6-7, lines 34-45, p. 16.

³⁴Pablo Neruda, "Cuerpo de mujer. . ." in 20 Poemas de amor y una Canción desesperada (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, S.A., 1967), pp. 11-12.

³⁵Padilla, "Dones," Part II, stanzas 8-10, lines 46-58, p. 17.

³⁶Ibid., Part III, stanzas 11-13, lines 59-78, pp. 17-18.

³⁷Ibid., stanza 12, lines 68-69, pp. 17-18.

³⁸Ibid., stanzas 14-15, lines 79-97, p. 18.

³⁹Neruda, "Cuerpo de mujer. . ." in 20 Poemas de amor y una Canción desesperada, stanza 4, lines 15-16, p. 12.

⁴⁰Padilla, "Dones," Part III, stanza 15, lines 87-89, 94-97, p. 18.

⁴¹Ibid., Part I, stanza 1, lines 1-2, p. 15.

⁴²Ibid., Part III, stanza 16, lines 98-106, p. 19.

⁴³Ibid., stanzas 17-18, lines 107-21, p. 19.

⁴⁴Ibid., Part IV, stanza 19, lines 122-28, pp. 19-20.

⁴⁵Ibid., lines 129-33, p. 20.

⁴⁶Padilla, "Padres e hijos," stanzas 1-2, lines 1-19, pp. 21-22.

⁴⁷Pablo Neruda, "Barrio sin luz," Crepusculario, 1923, in Literatura hispanoamericana, antología crítica: Tomo II: Desde el Modernismo hasta el presente, ed. Orlando Gomez-Gil, p. 348.

⁴⁸Padilla, "Puerta de golpe," p. 30.

⁴⁹Padilla, "Exilios" pp. 26-27.

⁵⁰Ibid., stanza 3, line 12, p. 26.

⁵¹Ibid., stanza 3, lines 22-23, p. 27.

⁵²Rubén Darío, "Canción de Otoño en primavera," Cantos de vida y esperanza, (1905), in Literatura hispanoamericana, antología crítica; Tomo II: Desde el Modernismo hasta el presente, ed. Orlando Gómez-Gil, stanza 1, lines 1-4, stanza 15, lines 64-67, p. 106.

⁵³Padilla, "De tiempo en tiempo, la guerra," stanza 1, lines 1-6, p. 31.

⁵⁴Ibid., stanza 2, lines 7-17, p. 31.

⁵⁵Ibid., stanza 3, lines 18-20, p. 31.

⁵⁶Padilla, "Rondas y poemas para los niños desconsolados de Occidente," stanza 1, lines 1-11, p. 49.

⁵⁷Ibid., stanza 2, lines 12-18, pp. 49-50.

⁵⁸Ibid., stanza 3, lines 19-25, p. 50.

⁵⁹Ibid., lines 26-34, p. 50.

⁶⁰Padilla, "Ronda de la pájara pinta," pp. 51-52.

⁶¹Padilla, "Retrato del poeta como un duende joven," Part I, stanza 1, lines 1-9, p. 32.

⁶²Ibid., stanza 2, lines 10-26, pp. 32-33.

⁶³Ibid., Part II, stanza 3, lines 27-41, p. 33.

⁶⁴Ibid., Part III, stanza 4, lines 42-73, pp. 33-34.

⁶⁵Ibid., Part IV, stanza 5, lines 74-89, p. 35.

⁶⁶Padilla, "Pancarta para 1960," pp. 66-67.

⁶⁷Orlando Gómez-Gil, ed., Introduction to "José Martí," in Literatura hispanoamericana, antología crítica; Tomo II: Desde el Modernismo hasta el presente, p. 3.

⁶⁸José Martí, "Versos sencillos," (1891), in Literatura hispanoamericana, antología crítica; Tomo II: Desde el Modernismo hasta el presente, ed. Orlando Gómez-Gil, Part I, stanza 12, lines 45-48, stanza 16, lines 61-64, Part III stanzas 1-2, lines 1-8, pp. 12-13.

⁶⁹Padilla, "Como un animal," in El justo tiempo humano, pp. 68-69.

⁷⁰Padilla, "Pancarta para 1960," in Fuera del juego, pp. 66-67.

- ⁷¹Padilla, "El justo tiempo humano," in El justo tiempo humano, p. 72.
- ⁷²Padilla, "Ahora que estás de vuelta," El justo tiempo humano, p. 71.
- ⁷³Padilla, "El árbol," El justo tiempo humano, p. 73.
- ⁷⁴Nicolás Guillén, "Tengo," in Tengo (Montevideo, Uruguay: Editorial el Siglo Ilustrado, 2nd ed., 1968), stanza 1, lines 1-6, stanza 5, lines 37-41, stanzas 7-9, lines 49-60, pp. 7-9.
- ⁷⁵José Mario, Introduction to Provocaciones (poemas) by Heberto Padilla (Madrid: Ediciones la gota de agua, 1973), p. 17.
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- ⁷⁷Heberto Padilla, Introduction to Fuera del juego, (Miami, Florida: Editorial S.I.B.I., new ed., n.d.), p. 9.
- ⁷⁸Padilla, "En tiempos difíciles," in Fuera del juego, pp. 9-10.
- ⁷⁹Lourdes Casal, ed., El caso Padilla: Lieratura y Revolución en Cuba (New York: Ediciones Nueva Atlantida, n.d.), p. 59.
- ⁸⁰Padilla, "El discurso del método," in Fuera del juego, pp. 11-12.
- ⁸¹Padilla, "Instrucciones para ingresar en una nueva sociedad," p. 58.
- ⁸²Padilla, "Oración para el fin de siglo," lines 16-27, p. 13.
- ⁸³Heberto Padilla, "Pancarta para 1960," in El justo tiempo humano, pp. 66-67.
- ⁸⁴Padilla, "Cantan los nuevos Césares," in Fuera del juego, pp. 9-10.
- ⁸⁵Padilla, "Arte y Oficio," in Fuera del juego, p. 73.
- ⁸⁶Padilla, "Escena," in Fuera del juego, p. 54.
- ⁸⁷Padilla, "Bajorrelieve para los condenados," in Fuera del juego, p. 62.
- ⁸⁸Padilla, "Estado de sitio," in Fuera del juego, stanza 4, lines 9-10, p. 52.

- ⁸⁹Padilla, "El hombre al margen," in Fuera del juego, p. 17.
- ⁹⁰Padilla, "También los humillados," in Fuera del juego, p. 51.
- ⁹¹Lourdes Casal, ed., El caso Padilla: Literatura y Revolución en Cuba, p. 7.
- ⁹²Padilla, "Una época para hablar," in Fuera del juego, p. 53.
- ⁹³Padilla, "Retrato del poeta como un duende joven," in El justo tiempo humano, pp. 32-35.
- ⁹⁴Padilla, "Oración para el fin de siglo," in Fuera del juego, pp. 13-14.
- ⁹⁵Padilla, "Fuera del juego," in Fuera del juego, lines 1-27, pp. 38-39.
- ⁹⁶Ibid., lines 28-52, p. 39.
- ⁹⁷Padilla, "Ahora que estas de vuelta," in El justo tiempo humano, p. 71.
- ⁹⁸Padilla, "Los poetas cubanos ya no sueñan," in Fuera del juego, p. 15.
- ⁹⁹Pablo Neruda, "Explico algunas cosas," Residencia en la tierra, Series I, II, III, (1925-1945), in Pablo Neruda, Five Decades: A Selection (Poems: 1925-1970), ed. Ben Belitt (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1974), stanzas 1-3, lines 1-9, stanza 5, lines 18-24, stanzas 7-8, lines 40-52, stanzas 12-13, lines 72-79, pp. 52-56.
- ¹⁰⁰Padilla, "En lugar del amor," in Fuera del juego, lines 11-15, p. 33.
- ¹⁰¹Padilla, "Poética," in Fuera del juego, p. 23.
- ¹⁰²Padilla, "Los viejos poetas, los viejos maestros," in Fuera del juego, p. 79.
- ¹⁰³Padilla, "No fue un poeta del porvenir," in Fuera del juego, p. 83.
- ¹⁰⁴Padilla, "Vámonos, cuervo," in Fuera del juego, p. 84.
- ¹⁰⁵Heberto Padilla, El hombre junto al mar (Barcelona, Spain: Editorial Seix Barral, S.A., 1981).
- ¹⁰⁶Padilla, "Los poetas cubanos ya no sueñan," in Fuera del juego, p. 15.

¹⁰⁷Padilla, "Instrucciones para ingresar en una nueva sociedad," in Fuera del juego, p. 58.

¹⁰⁸Padilla, "El hombre junto al mar," in El hombre junto al mar, p. 31.

¹⁰⁹Padilla, "El hombre al margen," in Fuera del juego, lines 14-15, p. 17.

¹¹⁰Padilla, "Lo mejor es cantar desde ahora," in El hombre junto al mar, lines 6, 20, p. 7.

¹¹¹Ibid., lines 1-5, p. 7.

¹¹²Ibid., lines 6-9, 29-30, pp. 7-8.

¹¹³Ibid., lines 33-38, p. 8.

¹¹⁴Padilla, "Canción del juglar," in El hombre junto al mar, p. 9.

¹¹⁵T. S. Eliot, "The Waste Land: I. The Burial of the Dead," in Collected Poems 1909-1962, stanza 1, lines 1, p. 53.

¹¹⁶Padilla, "Entre marzo y abril está mi mes más cruel," in El hombre junto al mar, lines 1-9, p. 24.

¹¹⁷Ibid., lines 10-11, p. 24.

¹¹⁸Ibid., lines 12-33, pp. 24-25.

¹¹⁹Ibid., lines 34-39, p. 25.

¹²⁰Ibid., lines 40-50, pp. 25-26.

¹²¹Ibid., lines 51-76, p. 26.

¹²²Ibid., lines 77-114, pp. 27-28.

¹²³Ibid., lines 115-22, p. 28.

¹²⁴Padilla, "Autorretrato del otro," in El hombre junto al mar, stanza 1, lines 1-12, p. 13.

¹²⁵Ibid., stanza 2, lines 13-29, pp. 13-14.

¹²⁶Ibid., stanza 3, lines 30-46, p. 14.

¹²⁷Ibid., stanza 3, lines 47-55, p. 15.

¹²⁸Padilla, "En verano," in El hombre junto al mar, lines 9-12, p. 30.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹³⁰Padilla, "El que regresa a las regiones claras," in El hombre junto al mar, lines 1, 8-10, 20-21, 24, 35, pp. 33-34.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, lines 11-13, p. 33.

¹³²*Ibid.*, Padilla, "Amándonos," in El hombre junto al mar, lines 2-3, p. 42.

¹³³*Ibid.*, lines 19-20, p. 42.

¹³⁴Padilla, "Que siempre exista tu cabeza," in El hombre junto al mar, p. 43.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, lines 11-12, p. 43.

¹³⁶Padilla, "Canción de aniversario," in El hombre junto al mar, p. 35.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, lines 8-11, p. 35.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, lines 12-16, p. 35.

¹³⁹Padilla, "La vida contigo," in El hombre junto al mar, p. 37.

¹⁴⁰Padilla, "A Belkis, cuando pinta," in El hombre junto al mar, lines 1-4, p. 39.

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*, lines 5-10, p. 39.

¹⁴²*Ibid.*, lines 11-36, pp. 39-40.

¹⁴³*Ibid.*, lines 11, 13-14, p. 39.

¹⁴⁴Padilla, "La promesa," in El hombre junto al mar, pp. 22-23.

¹⁴⁵Padilla, "El regalo," in El hombre junto al mar, pp. 109-110.

¹⁴⁶Padilla, "Canción del hijo prodigo," in El hombre junto al mar, p. 67.

¹⁴⁷Padilla, "La voz," in El hombre junto al mar, p. 108.

¹⁴⁸Padilla, "En los poemas," in El hombre junto al mar, p. 74.

¹⁴⁹Padilla, "La alegría abre tambien los ojos en la negrura," in El hombre junto al mar, lines 7-8, p. 80.

¹⁵⁰Padilla, "La formula," in El hombre junto al mar, lines 1-5, p. 78.

¹⁵¹Ibid., lines 6-14, p. 78.

¹⁵²Padilla, "Con solo abrir los ojos," in El hombre junto al mar, p. 97.

¹⁵³Heberto Padilla, Prologue to El hombre junto al mar (Barcelona, Spain: Editorial Seix Barral, S.A., 1981).

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